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Professor Stuart
From his friend
L. E. Porter

Prof. Dr. H. H. H.
Lehrer in Physik
L. R. R.

LECTURES.



LECTURES

ON

ELOQUENCE AND STYLE.

BY

EBENEZER PORTER, D. D.

Late President of the Theol. Seminary, Andover.

REVISED FOR PUBLICATION

BY

REV. LYMAN MATTHEWS,

Pastor of the South Church, Braintree, Ms.

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PREFACE.

THE following Lectures were designed by Dr. Porter for publication. The first course he had written with much care, and if his life had been spared, he would soon have committed them to the press. The MS. of the other course was left in an imperfect state. It exhibits in the numerous emendations of the author, clear evidence of his desire to render his instructions in the highest degree acceptable and useful. Several modifications in the plan of the course are noted, in conformity with which it was his intention to have remodeled the Lectures. These modifications had respect chiefly to arrangement. In revising the Lectures, it has been the aim of the editor to give them the general form they would have received from the author's hand. It should be said however, that in no case has the meaning of the original been designedly varied. The punctuation has also been carefully retained.

The Lectures on Eloquence do not comprise an entire course. With reference to them, Dr. Porter remarks in his "Directions respecting his MSS."—"These Lectures were intended as a sequel to those which have been incorporated into my Analysis of Rhetorical Delivery. I was induced to enlarge on the *vocal organs*, by urgent request of those whose judgment I regarded, and because no instruction on the abuses of those organs, has been accessible in any regular form to young ministers."

The Lectures on Style are also designedly limited in extent,

embracing only a few topics, the discussion of which was deemed by the author, most important in its bearing on the reputation and usefulness of the American pulpit. With a primary reference to these objects the Lectures were prepared. It is on this account, the more to be regretted, that they must be presented to the public, without the perfection both in sentiment and language, which the superior taste, and the extensive professional knowledge of the author would have imparted to them.

Several explanatory notes it has been found necessary to insert. Their form and object render their origin sufficiently obvious.

In accordance with the advice of several judicious friends of the author, the syllabus of the Lectures is omitted. Should a future edition be demanded, a place may be assigned to it, if desirable.

It has been thought best that these Lectures should be printed to correspond with those on Homiletics &c., and should be bound with the copies of that work yet in the publishers' hands, so as to constitute but one volume. In this way opportunity will be offered those desirous of possessing the Lectures of Dr. Porter, to obtain them in a more convenient, and at the same time, less expensive form, than if they were published in separate volumes. It is proposed, however, to bind a part of this edition separately for the accommodation of those who have purchased the volume on Homiletics, and who may desire to procure the remaining Lectures of the author.

L. MATTHEWS.

Braintree, April, 1836.

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LECTURES ON ELOQUENCE.

LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTORY.—UTILITY OF PRECEPTS.—ON WHAT THEIR
UTILITY DEPENDS.

THE Statutes of this Seminary require that in the department of *Sacred Rhetoric*, a competent number of Lectures shall be delivered, "On the importance of oratory ; on the invention and disposition of topics ; on the several parts of a regular discourse ; on elegance, composition and dignity of style ; on pronunciation, on the proper management of the voice and correct gesture ; on the immense importance of a natural manner ; on the rules to be observed in composing a sermon, and on the adaptation of the principles and precepts of ancient Rhetoric, to this modern species of oration ; on the qualities in the speaker, in his style, and in his delivery, necessary to a finished pulpit orator ; on the methods of strengthening the memory, and of improving in sacred eloquence ; on the character and style of the most ancient Divines, and the best models of imitation, their respective beauties and excellencies in thought and expression ; and above all, on the transcendent simplicity, beauty, and sublimity of the *sacred writings*."

The topics which according to this general plan it falls to me to discuss, may be divided into five classes.

In the *first* class, I shall call your attention to the *nature* and *ends* of eloquence, and to some sketches of its *history*.

In the *second* class, I shall consider the importance to a preacher of a thorough acquaintance with his *own* language ;—what things are implied in *purity* of style ;—the authority of *Etymology*, and of *good use* in language ;—principles that should govern the adoption of new words ;—the rights and the faults of Americans on this subject ;—general characteristics of style ;—perspicuity, strength, beauty and sublimity ;—directions in forming a style ; faults and excellencies in the style of the pulpit ; use and abuse of critical exercises, among theological students.

In the *third* class, I shall consider the work of public preaching. After some preparatory sketches of the pulpit in different periods ; I shall consider the structure of a regular sermon ; choice of text and subject ; exordium, explication and proposition, division, discussion, conclusion. General characteristics of good preaching ; as being instructive, evangelical, explicit and direct, affectionate, impressive.—In this class will also be included my remarks on written and unwritten sermons ; on occasional sermons, expository lectures, and public prayer.

The *fourth* class will embrace the general subject of *delivery* ; including the importance of the subject, earnestness in a speaker, preparatory discipline, strength and improvement of the vocal organs ; articulation, tones and inflections, emphasis, modulation, action.

The *fifth* class will include the chief qualities requisite in the preacher ; such as personal piety, soundness of faith, strength of intellect, biblical and theological learning, knowledge of men, taste, sensibility.*

* Of the Lectures of Dr. Porter on these several classes of topics, those of the third together with the last three of the second class, are comprised in the volume published just before his decease, on Homiletics, Preaching, and Public Prayer. Those of the fourth class, on articulation and the topics which follow, were incorporated into his Rhetorical Analysis. The lectures on the preceding topics of this class, and on those of the first two classes, are contained in this volume. Upon the topics of the fifth class no lectures are found among his manuscripts. Probably the substance of all he ever wrote on

Before I enter upon the regular discussion of these topics, I shall suggest some preliminary considerations, on the *utility* of *precepts* to the Christian student of Rhetoric and Oratory, particularly, as they respect the work of the preacher.

On this subject my *FIRST* remark is, that *mere technical rules cannot make any man eloquent*. They cannot furnish him with the matter and style of an eloquent discourse. The obvious reason is, that genius is the gift of God ; and where it is wanting, its production is as much beyond the power of human art, as any other act of creation. This remark however, is not restricted to the work of the preacher, the secular orator, or the critic : its application may be extended to all the employments of life, in which the exercise of intellect is required. No respectable attainments are ever made in literature or science, by the force of mere precepts, because a man is not the passive subject of a physical operation, while he is becoming acquainted with languages, with mathematics, or theology. In this process, he must have something more than books and teachers ; he must possess faculties of *thinking*, and must *use* them.

The same thing is true with reference to the polite and even the mechanic arts ; and in some sort it is true, with reference to every department of human action. The skilful legislator, or judge, or general, or painter, or poet ; nay, the skilful *husbandman* or *mechanic*, is never made such, by mere rules.

In application to the province of oratory and criticism, I admit that this principle has some *peculiar* claims to consideration. The properties and the importance of a correct and cultivated taste, I shall not now discuss. But it comes within my present purpose to say that a genuine perception of the beauties of style, depends on the structure of the mind ; and however it may be regulated, cannot be *produced* by art. That *mechanical correctness* which often assumes the name of taste, may indeed, be chiefly artificial. This may enable a man to detect a

these topics, is embraced in his Lecture on the Cultivation of Spiritual Habits, and Progress in Study, and in his Sermon on the Hindrances to Ministerial Usefulness.

violation of syntax, or to apply the canons of verbal criticism with great precision. For certain purposes, and to a certain extent, this technical accuracy is useful, and even indispensable. But while it qualifies one to discern blemishes with a microscopic eye, it often renders him (like the fly described by Addison, on a pillar of St. Paul's church), unable to perceive the design, the proportions, the beauty of a whole. Habits of minute accuracy ought to be formed ; but not at the expense of our sensibility, and our regard to objects of the highest magnitude. Longinus says, " That composition which is *sublime* with some *faults*, is better than that which is merely *correct* though *faultless*. Homer has faults. Apollonius and Theocritus are without a blemish : but who would choose to be Apollonius or Theocritus, rather than Homer ?" The same opinion was expressed by Pope in his own manner :

" Great wits sometimes may gloriously offend,
And rise to faults, true critics dare not mend."

If technical rules cannot furnish the *matter* and *style* of a discourse, it is equally true that they cannot produce a good *delivery*. They cannot produce that expression of voice and countenance, that flow of soul, in which the vital principles of true eloquence consist. These attributes of delivery must result in common cases, at least, from the enthusiasm of genius ; and in the pulpit, from the superadded influence of a solemn persuasion of the truth, and a deep sense of eternal things. Any man, therefore, certainly, any *preacher* who shall hope to succeed in public speaking, by an artificial manner, will fail of producing a good impression on respectable hearers, if he does not even make himself ridiculous.

My SECOND general remark is, that though mere precepts cannot supply the place of native endowments, *they may afford great assistance in the CULTIVATION of those endowments where they exist*. Even this, I know, has been *denied* ; but the denial is consistent neither with facts, nor with common sense. Some pieces of ground are incurably barren. Does it thence

follow that every fertile spot of ground is a garden? A sculptor cannot create marble. Do we say therefore that the use of the chisel is absurd? or that a rude block from the quarry, is the same thing as a finished statue? No technical rules could have produced Demosthenes, Apelles, Virgil or Handel. Yet no one can suppose that these masters in their respective arts of eloquence, painting, poetry, and music, attained their high perfection without study and labor. Every art has its elementary principles, which must be theoretically *known* before they can be applied to practical purposes. A man may as well hope to become a physician or philosopher, by chance, as an orator. Quintilian illustrates this thought by an example. "A gladiator though never taught to fence, is reckoned brave for rushing on his adversary; and a wrestler, potent, who by main strength, holds fast what he has seized with his grasp. But the former is often ruined by the fierceness of his onset, and the latter surprised to see all his impetuosity frustrated by a dexterous motion of his antagonist." So, he says, "a man may speak without learning; but no man is truly an orator, unless he has *learned* to be so." If other arts have, in every nation, been deemed proper subjects of study and instruction, and schools for these purposes have been thought necessary in every period; he must indeed be a prodigy of genius, who can learn nothing in the art of writing and speaking from the precepts of Tully and Quintilian, the example of eloquent men, and the diligent cultivation of his own powers.

A THIRD general remark is, that *the utility of precepts depends on two things* :—

1. *On their being applied with JUDGMENT.*

Quintilian says "We must keep to a certain *way*, and a certain *order* for speaking well. It is a thing to be done according to *rule*, and not at random: a thing in which an ignorant person will be surpassed by one that is learned." Yet he says,

"The rules of rhetoric must admit of variation, according to time, circumstances and necessity."

"For a general, whenever he puts his army in order of battle, first to range properly his van, next to display his wings on each side, and then to place his cavalry on the right and on the left, is the best position when it is practicable. But if a precipice, a river, a forest, a defile, obstruct this order, there is a necessity for altering it. At one time the line of battle must present a full front; at another, the form of a wedge: here, the corps of reserve must be drawn up; there, the legion. In like manner, to know whether the exordium be necessary or superfluous, whether it ought to be long or short, whether the narration ought to be concise or diffuse, divided or continued, direct or transposed, all these particulars depend on the nature of the case, and by it they must be decided." "The art of speaking," continues this great master, "requires labor, study, long experience and practice, consummate prudence, a signal presence of mind, and an acute judgment. We shall therefore proceed, as we see necessary, by different routes; sometimes quitting the public road for a shorter one; sometimes making a circuit, if torrents have swept away the bridges; and escaping through a window if a fire has reached the door."

According to these obvious principles, it is certain that the utility of precepts to the orator, depends very much upon a sound judgment, by which he may determine what is proper in any given case. Next to this, it depends,

2. *On the familiarity of* HABIT.

My meaning is that the elementary principles of good writing and speaking, should be so well known to us, that we may apply them, of *course*, without effort, and without reflection, at the time. Does any one think this impossible? Perhaps a little attention to the subject may serve to correct such an opinion. The maxim, that "custom is a second nature," is ground-

ed on philosophy, and especially on experience. The facility with which we combine and use the elements of knowledge, in all common cases, proves that the mind may perform the most complex operations, not only without difficulty, but without being conscious of its own acts. Dugald Stewart in his treatise on "Intellectual habits," cites the following passage from Polybius. "Many things which appear in the beginning to be absolutely impracticable, are in the course of time, and by continual use, accomplished with the greatest ease. Among numberless instances, the art of *reading* may be mentioned, as one of the clearest and most convincing proofs of this remark. Take a man who has never learned to read, but is otherwise a man of sense; set a child before him who has learned, and order him to read a passage in a book. It is certain that this man will scarcely be able to persuade himself, that the child, as he reads, must consider distinctly, first the *form of all the letters*; in the next place their *power*; and thirdly, their *connexion, one with another*: for each of these things requires a certain portion of time. But if to the reading some *gesture* should be added; if the child should observe all the *stops*, and all the *breathings* rough and smooth, it will be impossible to convince the man that this is true. Hence we may learn, never to be deterred from any useful pursuit, by the seeming difficulties that attend it; but to endeavour rather to surmount those difficulties by practice and habit."*

This illustration is perfectly simple, and corresponds with our experience in many other cases. You sit down and write a letter to your friend. In doing this you apply all the principles of language which you have been learning from infancy. You combine *letters* into *syllables* and *words*; you make *words* the *vehicle of thought*; you apply the *rules of orthography*, of *syntax*, of *punctuation*, and of *rhetoric*; and at the same instant, the rules of that wonderful art, by which the pen records the acts of the mind. In thirty minutes, you have applied as

* Stewart's Phil. Essays, p. 412.

many rules as you could think over methodically, in a week : and yet, in this surprising process, probably you have not been conscious, at the time, of applying a *single* rule.

Perhaps the same power of habit in forming rapid associations of thought, would be still better illustrated, by examining the progress of a person from the first rudiments of music, through the intermediate stages of improvement to the skill of a master on some complicated instrument. The perfection of this skill in the performer, depends on his exact conformity to the settled principles of his art. But his application of rules, must be so familiar by custom, as not to require the labor of *recollection*, or his performance is spoiled.

Just so in the province of style and elocution. If we would derive benefit from precepts, they must be *familiar* ;—must be *inwrought* into our habits of thinking and speaking ; and must be applied in practice, spontaneously. We must carry into our public performances, those habits which are already formed. If these habits are correctly and thoroughly formed, the operations of the mind will no more be interrupted by their application, than by the motion of the heart and lungs. But whatever our habits may be, the attempt to *mend* them would be absurd, at a moment when every thought should be devoted to objects of higher importance.

Finally ; though the principles of eloquence, being founded in the nature of man, are essentially the same in all ages and countries, yet the Christian *preacher* eminently needs a sound judgment, in applying scholastic precepts to his *peculiar* work. The interests committed to him, as much transcend those which have employed the splendid eloquence of secular orators, as the concerns of eternity surpass in importance, the momentary concerns of time. The spirit of the pulpit is to be learned, not in the school of Aristotle, but in the school of that great Teacher who came from God. Never then, let us build our hopes of usefulness to the church, on mere human attainments ; nor submit our understandings to the guidance of human precepts, so far as to forget that one is our *Master*, even Christ.

LECTURE II.

DEFINITION OF ELOQUENCE ;—ITS ENDS ;—AND HISTORY.

IN entering upon the execution of the plan proposed in my introductory lecture, it is proper to apprise you that I shall pass very briefly over some of the first heads of the course, as being but subordinately connected with its main design.

It may be proper also to remark, that no peculiar elevation or ornament of language, will be employed in these Lectures, from respect to what their subjects might be thought to demand. Unquestionably, a didactic treatise on *Eloquence* and *Style*, requires the same simplicity of manner as is adapted to the elementary discussion of any *other* subject.

We proceed now to inquire,

I. WHAT IS ELOQUENCE ?

The most celebrated writers on Rhetoric and Oratory, have given different answers to this question. Isocrates called eloquence, “ the power of persuading ; ”—and in other words expressive of the same thought,—“ the skill of persuasion.” Gorgias defined it,—“ the power of persuading, by *speaking* : ” and Aristotle,—“ the power of *inventing* whatever is persuasive in discourse.” Quintilian says this last definition is defective, because it leaves out of sight the *end* of rhetoric ; and because it includes only *invention*, which without elocution, cannot constitute a discourse. Nor is he satisfied with the description of eloquence, given by Theodectes, that it is “ the leading of men

wherever one pleases, by the faculty of speaking ;"—nor with that of Cicero, that "it is speaking in a manner proper to persuade." "Does not money, he asks, likewise persuade? Does not personal influence, the authority of the speaker, the dignity of a respectable man, persuade? Others, besides the orator, persuade by their *words*, and even without *speaking* a word, induce men to do what they please. On the contrary, an *orator* does not *always* persuade; sometimes it is not properly his end."

This acute writer having condemned the definitions of his predecessors, gives as his own, that "Eloquence is the science of speaking well." Without supposing Quintilian tinctured with that pride of originality, which he ascribes to others, as a motive for seeming to differ from all who wrote before them; it is difficult to perceive that his own definition is essentially more perfect than those which he rejects. Probably all these rhetoricians meant much the same thing, though they adopted different phraseology to *express* their meaning. Modern critics following Quintilian, have objected to the definitions of Aristotle and Cicero on two accounts. *First*, "to say that 'Rhetoric is the art of persuasion,' is to make *success* the only criterion of eloquence;" whereas "all the arts of rhetoric have often been employed without producing persuasion." *Secondly*, "Persuasion is effected by money, by personal influence, and even by silence, as well as by eloquence."

Why, on the same principles, shall not the common definition of *logic*, be rejected? Why shall we not say in the same style of critical discrimination;—*First*, all the powers of logic have often been employed without producing conviction of the understanding: or *Secondly*, earthquakes, fires, and diseases, are often instruments of conviction; therefore Logic is not the art of reasoning.

In justice to Quintilian, it is to be observed, that his definition of eloquence has respect to the moral qualities of an orator; and supposes that none but a man of pure intentions, can properly be denominated eloquent. Yet in other places he admits,

as of course he must admit, that eloquence may be *perverted*: that is, it may be employed by bad men, for bad purposes.

After all his labor to set up a perfect distinction, at the expense of his predecessors, to what does it amount? "Rhetoric is the science of speaking well—consequently, to speak well is its proper end." In other words, the end of eloquence, is to be eloquent. Now it is certain that every human effort is made, for the accomplishment of some purpose beyond *itself*. When a man speaks to his fellow men, he has some *design*, some *object*, which he wishes to promote by speaking. If he is a *bad* man, his object will be perhaps, fame, or money, or power. If he is a *good* man, he will aim to accomplish some useful and benevolent end:—to enforce some duty, to avert calamity, to render his fellow men better and happier. For the attainment of his ultimate object, whatever it may be, the orator proposes other objects, which are intermediate and subordinate. These are usually classed under the heads of instruction, pleasure, and persuasion: thus Cicero says, "He is the perfect orator who in speaking, instructs, delights, and moves his hearers."

In this view of the subject, among all the definitions of eloquence which I have seen, I am best satisfied with that of Dr. Campbell, viz. that "in its largest acceptation, it is that art or talent by which the discourse is adapted to its end."

II. WHAT IS THE END OF ELOQUENCE?

The general answer is,—*to move men to action as rational beings*. This answer has of necessity, been partly anticipated, in the remarks just made.

For whatever purpose we address our fellow men, the attainment of that purpose commonly requires that they should be excited to *do* something. *Action* presupposes *feeling*, and feeling, *conviction*. Hence writers on Rhetoric have generally agreed in saying, that its principal end is *persuasion*. Aristotle and Plato laid it down as a maxim, that "the best precepts are unavailing, if the minds of men are not moved:" and the Ro-

man masters taught, that "to move the heart, is the life and soul of eloquence."* On this principle, the theory of the passions, and the various avenues to the human heart, were subjects of much study in the rhetorical schools of Greece. The affections were classed into two general denominations; one comprehending the milder, such as favor, benevolence, mercy, called *ἡθος*—the other, comprehending the more vehement, as anger, hatred, grief, joy, called *παθος*. But as men are never induced to act without motive, and without more or less excitement of feeling: so it should be remembered that the heart is accessible chiefly through the intellect. No one is delighted or moved with that which he does not understand, or does not believe. The affections therefore cannot be moved, unless the understanding is previously enlightened; at least, they cannot be moved in any manner which is worthy of the dignity of true eloquence. From this established connexion betwixt reasoning and persuasion, probably the Latin word *oratio*, (the reasoning of speech, *oris ratio*,) was derived. The end of true eloquence, then, is to move men to *action*,—proper and useful action; as rational beings; by exhibiting light to convince the understanding, and motives to influence the heart. The end of *sacred* eloquence, is to bring men to believe, and feel, and act, as the gospel requires; in other words, to make them good and happy.

III. THE HISTORY OF ELOQUENCE.

A very brief sketch is all that will be attempted under this head.

The capacity of expressing thoughts by articulate language has, with a few exceptions, been common to men, from the beginning of the world. By this medium of intercourse, chiefly, individuals have communicated to others, their opinions and feelings, on all subjects. But the use which has been made of the faculty of speech, constitutes almost as great a difference betwixt one man

* Arist. L. 1. c. 2. Quin. L. 6. c. 2. Cic. De Or.

and another, as the possession of it does betwixt men and brutes. If we compare the prattle of a child, with the eloquence of Demosthenes, or the profane vulgarity of a clown, with the elevated strains of Christian piety, which flowed from the lips of Bates or Baxter, we see that the purposes, for which the tongue is employed, are as various as the intellectual and moral characters of men.

In the early periods of the world, *oral* language was the principal medium of communication. Of course, the personal influence of any one, over his fellow men, must have been very much in proportion to his skill in *speaking*. Accordingly we find from the first traces of history, that this art was deemed indispensable to heroes and statesmen, and was in fact contemporary, in its origin, with the social relations of men. The book of Job, which has been so justly admired for its beauty and sublimity, is a book of *speeches*. Aaron was eloquent. The speeches of Moses and Samuel, exhibit specimens of tender and powerful oratory.

But not to dwell upon the eloquence of the Hebrews here, it is evident that the art of speaking among *other* nations, especially the *Greeks*, had been considerably cultivated in the time of Homer. No man can avoid this conclusion, if he reads the *Iliad*, remembering that it was a copy of real life and manners, when it was written. If eloquence was unknown at that period, why should this "poet of nature," or how *could* he draw its characteristics so perfectly; and give the world such striking examples of the concise and sententious, in Menelaus;—the grave and persuasive, in Nestor; the bold and vehement, in Ulysses?

Pausanias affirms that before the Trojan war, and during the reign of Theseus, a *school of Rhetoric* was opened in Greece. The common opinion however is, that the *first regular* instruction in this art, was given by *Empedocles*, in the Island of Sicily, about *four centuries and a half* before the Christian era. Cicero says that Corax and Tisias, also of Sicily, were the first, who taught it in the form of *written institutes*. These were

succeeded by their countryman Gorgias Leontinus, so often mentioned, with respect, by Cicero in his *De Oratore*. He was contemporary with Socrates, and other distinguished Rhetoricians. I shall not repeat the names of those sophists, who about this time, arose in Greece, and whom Plato, the disciple of Socrates, sarcastically called *λογοποιῶντες*—*word-makers*.

The next distinguished teacher of Rhetoric, was *Isocrates*, a pupil of Gorgias. His school at Athens was for some time resorted to by a vast number of students. Though he lived at that period when the liberties of Greece were threatened by Philip, and when the highest powers of genius and eloquence were called into action; the feebleness of his voice, and his excessive diffidence, prevented his speaking in the popular assemblies. His writings were much admired in his own time; though the best critics have censured his style, as abounding with artificial ornaments, with affectation of point and antithesis, and with plagiarism. This charge is especially made against his principal work, entitled the *panegyric*, which is said to have cost him the labor of ten years. He was the first who studied that nice collocation of words which constitutes musical cadence. As it often happens in similar cases, what his style gained in point of grace, by this process of refinement, was gained at the expense of spirit and strength. But that he was no contemptible writer, might be inferred, if there were no other evidence, from the approbation which Cicero bestowed upon him.

Aristotle succeeded Isocrates. Possessing a genius profound and acute, cultivated by the instructions of Plato, and by habits of indefatigable study, he acquired the title of "the philosopher of truth." He was one of those master spirits, which extort a kind of involuntary homage from mankind. As a man of universal learning, and especially as a teacher of criticism and oratory, he sustained the highest reputation. For ten years, it is said he was preceptor to Alexander, afterwards *the Great*, concerning whom, Philip wrote as follows to Aristotle. "I inform you that I have a son; I thank the gods, not so much for making me a father, as for giving me a son, in an age, when he

can have Aristotle for his instructor. I hope you will make him a successor, worthy of me, and a king, worthy of Macedonia."

Aristotle's rhetoric is the *first* regular treatise on that subject, now extant. It consists of three books: the first, on the relation between Rhetoric and Logic; the second, on the philosophy of the passions; and the third, on the properties and parts of elocution. It is evidently the work of a vigorous mind, though written in a manner very abstract and aphoristical.

Next after Aristotle, *Demetrius Phalerius* was most conspicuous, as a writer on oratory and criticism. The work on Rhetoric, commonly supposed to be his, has, indeed, been ascribed by some learned men to another Demetrius; and by some to Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Without entering into this question, I remark that the power of his eloquence was certainly great, as it raised him to supreme authority in Athens, for ten years; during which time, three hundred and sixty brazen statues are said to have been erected to his honour. But it is probable, that he contributed more than any other man, to corrupt that masculine energy, which had so long distinguished the eloquence of Greece; and to introduce that gaudy and effeminate style, which followed the days of Demosthenes.

This sketch of Greek Rhetoricians closes with the name of *Longinus*. Before his time, the fire of genius, by which his country had astonished the world, was almost extinct. The lightning and thunder of Demosthenes, was succeeded by affected glitter of ornament, by feeble, puerile, cold declamation. About two hundred and fifty years after Christ, Longinus appeared, like an evening star, to illumine for a moment, the commencement of that night, in which the glory of Greece was sinking forever. His treatise on the *Sublime*, though mutilated in its present form, being rather a collection of fragments than a complete treatise, is a work of such standard excellence, that the world may well lament the loss of his *other* compositions.

In this summary, I have designedly omitted any mention of the dramatic poets, *Æschylus*, *Sophocles*, *Euripides*, and *Me-*

sander ; the study of whose writings was deemed essential to the formation of an orator. And my limits scarcely allow me to notice Herodotus and Thucydides, in whose hands history assumed all the charms of eloquence : flowing and fascinating in the former ; acute, concise and sublime in the latter.

The origin of Eloquence in *Rome* is covered with obscurity. The military form of the government, and the barbarous habits of the people, were fatal *obstacles*, for ages, to the cultivation of genius and the arts. When their conquests began to extend in Greece, about one hundred and fifty years before the Christian era, the period of their refinement probably commenced. The rhetoricians and philosophers of Greece, who had before been banished, were invited to settle in Rome, and become the teachers of her sons. *Cato* the Censor, was the first Roman who wrote on eloquence. One hundred and fifty of his orations were extant in the Augustan age. The next treatise on this subject, was written by *Marcus Antonius*, who was a professed teacher of Rhetoric. These were succeeded by *Cicero*, in the blaze of whose talents, every Roman name that preceded him, is lost. *Hortensius* was the rival of this illustrious orator ; and though celebrated by Cicero himself, his powers were eclipsed by the superior genius of his mighty competitor.

Julius Caesar, Quintilian says, had he been devoted to eloquence, was the only Roman, whose strength and eloquence of diction, would have made him the compeer of Cicero. Among those who held an important, though less conspicuous rank, may be mentioned the two brothers, Caius and Tiberius *Gracchus*, who rose to the first honours of the state by their eloquence. And that *Mark Antony* the younger, was a powerful orator, might be inferred from the prodigious effects of a single speech, made to the people of Rome, after the assassination of Caesar.

Seneca was a great man. His writings, while they exhibit great compass of thought, and sublimity of sentiment, are chargeable with artificial display of point and smartness. Quintilian says that " he was distinguished in every province of eloquence ; that his genius fitted him for great things ; but that his style,

though possessing many qualities to command admiration, is full of enchanting blemishes; and proper for the perusal only of those whose taste is formed."

Finally, the constellation of Roman orators and critics, terminated with Quintilian himself. He was born in Spain, but spent his life in Rome, where he died Anno Domini 95. Having risen to the first eminence at the bar, he was employed by the emperor, with an ample salary from the public treasury, as a teacher of Rhetoric. After he retired from this office, which he had sustained for twenty years, with unexampled reputation, he wrote his great work, *de Institutione Oratoria*. Calling to the aid of his own transcendent talents the best labors of all who had gone before him, it is but justice to say, that he produced the most complete system of oratory, that has been written in any language. To confirm this remark, it is sufficient to mention the fact, that every respectable treatise on this subject, since the time of Quintilian, has been confessedly indebted to him, for its elementary principles. Happily this work, so celebrated since the revival of letters, escaped, though it did but just escape, the wrecks of the dark ages. After being buried for centuries, it was discovered by a Florentine, among the rubbish of a decayed monastery, and thus providentially rescued from oblivion.

LECTURE III.

TOPICS TO BE CONSIDERED.—A CONVICTION OF ITS IMPORTANCE
REQUISITE TO THE ATTAINMENT OF A GOOD ELOCUTION.

Though *Eloquence* is much more extensive in meaning than *Elocution* or *Delivery*, the purpose of the following Lectures does not require me to preserve with much exactness, the distinction of these terms. I design, in these Lectures, to exhibit some principles appertaining to the art of public speaking,—which principles are *preparatory* to practical exercises in this art. In executing this design, I shall have occasion to take notice with more or less particularity, of the following points ; —The *importance* of a good Elocution ; Necessity of earnestness ; Causes which influence the intellectual and moral habits ; —Influence of *personal piety* on the eloquence of the preacher ; —Obstacles to the cultivation of eloquence ; —Characteristics of our age and country *favorable* to it ; and the utility of *preparatory practice* in elocution. I shall also offer some remarks on *voice*, and on the perfection and preservation of the vocal organs.

A primary requisite to the attainment of a good elocution, is A DEEP CONVICTION OF ITS IMPORTANCE.

Euripides styled eloquence *τὴν τυραννὸν ἀνθρώποις μόνην*, *the only queen among men*. First, by a cursory glance at the effects of *secular* eloquence, in different periods, we may be satisfied how far this position is justifiable.

Of Pericles, it is said, that “the goddess of persuasion dwelt on his lips.” Such was the force of his eloquence, that he

"moulded the Athenians into what shape he pleased, and presided with unlimited authority in all their assemblies." This he did, not through a momentary effervescence of popular favor; but for *forty years*, during which time, the most powerful men in Athens were unable to shake the influence, which resulted from his individual weight of character.

Even Cicero, with his profusion of words, seems at a loss how to describe the effects produced by the ancient orators. He says "they were vehement as the tempest, irresistible as the torrent, awful as thunder. The rapid flood of their eloquence rolled on, overwhelming, and bearing away every thing in its course." Facts justify this representation. Look at the influence of Demosthenes when Philip invaded Greece. A consummate general comes, with a powerful army, trained to high achievements, and accustomed to victory;—comes to attack a people once mighty, indeed, but now sunken in effeminacy; devoted to trivial amusements; enfeebled and dispirited by internal factions. Surely all is lost. No—the voice of one man calls on Greece to awake; calls in loud tones of remonstrance and indignation; summons from the grave, the ancient defenders of her liberty, to witness the shame of their degenerate sons. Greece awakes, listens, rushes to arms; her effeminate citizens become men and veterans; her intrepid legions pour on the hosts of Macedon, and rescue their country from impending ruin.

Cæsar arraigns Ligarius for trial. The most inveterate of all passions, revenge, demands the sacrifice of the illustrious victim; and the hope of his escape is diminished by the fact, that the acknowledgment of his innocence, must imply the guilt of his judge. How can Ligarius be acquitted, when his life depends on the clemency of one who has waded to empire through the blood of his countrymen; and the permanence of whose power, requires the extermination of those who have dared to oppose it? Cæsar ascends the tribunal, not to be guided by the dictates of equity, but to cover his purpose with the forms of law: for the decree of death is already made out. The trial proceeds. The prince of Roman orators stands up the advo-

cate of the accused. The judge listens to the fervid appeals of argument and eloquence ; he is convinced, warmed, melted, turns pale, trembles, drops from his hand the fatal decree,—for-gives.

Is it in the power of eloquence when employed in the common affairs of this world, thus to break through the barriers of prejudice, of passion, of interest ; thus to seize and subdue the heart ; to confound the purposes, and control the actions of men ? and can it then in the *second* place, be deemed a *useless* attainment to the Christian preacher ? “ If profane men in profane causes, require skill in an orator, how much more is it to be required in *sacred* affairs.” If our estate or life were suspended on a judicial trial, who of us would not wish for an eloquent man as our advocate ? Why then, if the soul of our brother, sister, or child, is to be rescued from eternal death, should we not wish the motives of the Gospel to be addressed to them by a powerful and persuasive eloquence ? The debate which involves the interests of a country, or which, in any considerable degree, involves the property or reputation of an individual, we expect will awaken all the energy of the senator or pleader. Is he then, who is to treat the most elevated and awful subjects, which the universe can furnish, the *only* man in whom indifference can be tolerated ? Is he, by whom (in the proper discharge of his office,)

——“ the violated law speaks out

“ Its thunders ; and by whom, in strains as sweet

“ As angels use, the gospel whispers peace ;—

is *he* the only man, who can be excused in slumbering, and compelling others to slumber, over his subject ? The ambition of Philip, the treason of Cataline, the usurpation of Cæsar, called forth strains of eloquence which have been the admiration of succeeding ages. Yet these subjects were trifles, fit only for the prattle of children, compared with the joyful and dreadful themes that employ the preacher’s tongue.

If any one doubts that *religion* affords scope for the highest efforts of eloquence, let him look at the preaching of Paul; let him look at the effects produced by the elegant and animated discourses of Chrysostom. At a later period, let him see Peter the Hermit return from the holy land, and raise the voice of expostulation and entreaty, that the Savior's tomb might be rescued from the profanation of infidels. He called, and Europe was roused; he sighed, and the flame of zeal kindled from heart to heart, through Christendom. At the pointing of his finger, eight hundred thousand warriors enlisted in the enterprise, and marched under the banner of the cross. This fact demonstrates that religion, even when obscured by superstition, and perverted by false zeal, furnishes materials for the most energetic and efficacious appeals to the human heart.

When Massillon entered the pulpit, not the pious and the sober merely, but the votaries of pleasure and business thronged the church. "The theatre was forsaken, the court forgot their amusements, and the monarch descended from his throne," to hear the illustrious preacher. "While he spoke, the king trembled; while he denounced the indignation of God against a corrupted court, nobility shrunk into nothing; while he described the terrors of a judgment to come, infidelity turned pale; and the congregation, unable to resist the power of his language, rose from their seats in agony."

Look at Whitefield, surrounded by an assembly which no church in Christendom could contain. Twenty thousand auditors hang on his lips, while every ear is open, every eye is fixed, every bosom swells with tender emotion, or throbs with anguish. What is this irresistible power, which holds these hearers, now in breathless awe; then hurries them away with the strong impulse of pity, remorse, or terror; which alternately dazzles, strikes, soothes, alarms, agitates the soul? You say the force of *truth* produced these effects. But whence the utter insensibility, with which the *same men* could often hear the *same truths*, from the lips of preachers, equal perhaps in piety, and superior certainly in learning, to Whitefield? Alas!

learning and even piety may occupy the pulpit, and yet the hearers be cold, because the preacher is so. But the glowing sensibility of Whitefield's heart, gave a warmth and weight to his words, which opened an instant passage to the hearts of others. Whoever saw him in the pulpit, saw an eloquent man. His tones, his eye, his action, spoke the fervid emotion of his soul ; spoke with an energy which compelled insensibility to listen, and obduracy to feel. Surely the preacher who exhibits the truths of the Gospel, so as to inspire a crowd of immortal beings with awful and universal interest, puts to rest forever the question, whether eloquence is important or not, in the pulpit.

If such were all preachers, the form of our sacred eloquence would no more be subject to the reproach, that "the pulse at her heart, beats languidly ; and her pale lip attests that no seraph has touched it with a live coal from off the altar."

To the Christian minister, the motives to cultivate the power of speaking, are all substantially combined in one, viz. *it is directly subservient to his main purpose as a religious teacher.* It must, therefore, be to him preeminently important.

That he is most likely to attain a good elocution, other things being equal, who is most convinced of its importance, is confirmed by all experience. The first among ancient orators to whom I recently alluded, became such, not by birth, nor by accident. At the age of sixteen, having felt the power and witnessed the effects of a splendid effort at the bar, he resolved with the ardor of enthusiasm to devote himself wholly to the study of eloquence. He saw that this was the high road to influence among his countrymen. Though the defects of his organs and utterance were such, that the fire of his genius was repeatedly stifled by the hisses of his auditors, the flame was rekindled to burn with a growing intensity. With a steadfastness that nothing could shake, he advanced towards his object. Greece collected in crowds, when he was to speak ; and the proud invader of his country paid him the high tribute of saying, "I dread the eloquence of that man, more than all the fleets and armies of

the Athenians ;—he is their soul ; he puts arms and oars into their hands ; he transforms them into new men.” Such was the process by which the son of a blacksmith, a sickly, stammering youth became, at the age of twenty eight, the first man in his country.

By a similar purpose and perseverance, as you know, was his great successor and rival in fame, the Roman orator formed. “Tanta oblectatio est,” said he, “in ipsa facultate dicendi, ut nihil hominum, aut auribus, aut mentibus, jucundius percipi possit.” Knowledge without the power of speaking, he was well aware could not give him unlimited ascendancy over the minds of his fellow-men.

Do you say that these men were actuated by a love of worldly fame, and therefore are not fit examples for the Christian preacher ? Admit that his *motives* should be infinitely superior to theirs ; that they are the most cogent which the universe can furnish ; and that his objects have an elevation and grandeur, which cast theirs into the shade, and fix on them the stamp of littleness ; shall he, on this account, be excused for comparative supineness ? Truly it is the reproach of the church, that with all our literary institutions, our facilities for high attainments, and with a religion adapted to expand to the utmost the powers of human intellect, her sons, called to minister at her altars, should look back with awful reverence, after twenty centuries, on *paganism* for examples of eloquence, while at the same time they unite to extol and despair to imitate. Among worldly great men of *modern* times, we have similar examples to show that the power of one mind over others, depends not on the possession of knowledge without the skill of using it. William Pitt, with advantages of education, not superior on the whole, to those which some men in this Seminary have enjoyed, became prime minister of England at the age of twenty-four, and undertook duties which called for more mental resource, and more talent in debate than were demanded in any other statesman on the globe. How could he have filled that station, had he consumed his early years in mere attention to books,

and neglected to cultivate the use of his *pen* and his *tongue*? Why then should we look for eminent usefulness in the Christian minister, who attaches no importance to that one qualification, without which, all others must be unavailing? Certainly I am not to be understood as encouraging ignorance in a preacher. Learning he must have. The taste and the exigencies of the age demand this. Christian learning is the heavy artillery of the church, against the armies of the aliens. But no captain of our host will inspire dread in those armies, by all his array of guns and deadly missiles, if at the same time, he is known to be totally unskilled in the art of loading and firing.

We sometimes hear it said that, in forming an eminent preacher, "the great thing is not to cultivate delivery, but to make him a *sound thinker*, and to store his mind with knowledge." Now if this remark means that, so far as intellect is concerned, thought is the basis of good preaching, we can neither deny it, nor give it the credit of oracular wisdom. Certainly no man can be eloquent who does not utter important thoughts; and no man can utter these who does not possess them. To suppose then, that any extent of knowledge or of logical powers, can supersede the utility of skill in speaking, is absurd. The value of knowledge consists in the *ends* to which it is to be applied. To a man alone on a desert island, gold is worthless, because he *cannot use* it. In the chest of a miser, gold is worthless, because he *will not use* it. The act of hoarding may give that miser pleasure, but his pleasure is not worthy of a man. The mere student, whose time and efforts are employed in hoarding knowledge, is a *literary miser*. To what *end* is his knowledge laid up;—of what *value* is it to the world, while he cannot *speaking* it, nor *write* it? But when his stock shall have become large enough, he resolves then to study the art of communication. So resolves the miser:—but *resolves only*,—and resolves, till he dies; and then the common suffrage of survivors adopts as the motto for his memory, "He was a useless man." Life is not so long that its vigor may all be spent in getting *ready* to live.

All my remarks on this subject are to be understood, not as appealing to a vain desire of distinction in the Christian preacher, but to that desire of *usefulness* which Christian benevolence implies. In this view, I add a simple fact which requires no comment. The world to whom you are to preach, consists chiefly of plain men. Each of these thinks for himself as to what preaching should be. And what does he demand? That you *speak* well. You may say he is no judge. Yet he does judge for himself; and will; and, what is more to the purpose, he *commonly judges right*. He may perhaps be deceived with the *ostentation* of eloquence;—but give him that which is *real*, and he infallibly *feels* its power. And as to its importance, it may I presume be affirmed that on no point whatever is public taste, including all classes, more united. It would amuse you to see in the many applications for preachers, addressed to your instructors, from Missionary Societies, and cities, and villages of our country, how common is this emphatic request, “Send us a man that can *speak* well.”

You see then, gentlemen, that the question whether you shall aim to attain an interesting delivery? comes to you with an individual application, and assumes no other shape than this; whether you shall aim at the highest sphere of *usefulness* in the church of God?

LECTURE IV.

NECESSITY OF EARNESTNESS.—CAUSES WHICH INFLUENCE THE INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL HABITS.

Another requisite to the attainment of a good delivery is **EARNESTNESS OR WARMTH.**

So indispensable is this, that without it, no other qualities can make an interesting public speaker. You may suppose a man to possess piety, genius, learning, imagination, fire; but he cannot *preach*. Why? There is a capital defect;—he has no voice, or has an insurmountable stammering in his speech. You may suppose another man, a preacher too, of whom it will commonly be said,—he is a deep thinker, or a great reader, but he is dull in the pulpit, or in simple phrase, “he cannot preach.” Now if this man had been born dumb, or with some incurable defect of vocal organs, he would never have thought of the ministry for his profession. But he has no defect of voice, and yet he fails utterly of producing interest in the pulpit. Why? with all his erudition, his discourse is dry and lifeless, because he himself has no vital warmth. Then let him be a merchant, a physician, or if he will a closet student,—“Plunged to the hilt in learned tomes, and rusted in.” But let him not mar the sacred work of preaching the gospel, by bringing to it a heart that never felt one throb of emotion worthy of the pulpit, and lips that never were touched with a coal from the altar of God. Truly that preacher who cannot preach must have rare endowments for his work. Who would think of furnishing other professions with men distinguished in the same

manner?—excellent *mariners*, except on board a ship! excellent *warriors*, except in the field of battle! excellent *physicians*, except in the chamber of sickness!

In some departments of literary labor, I allow that a man of mere intellect, without sensibility, may be very useful. If he is a lexicographer, or otherwise a writer of elementary works, it is perhaps necessary that he should be so void of emotion, or so able to suppress it, that his ardor may not impugn his credit for impartiality or accuracy. Only a *few* such men however, are needed. In the estimation of the great world, what rank is given to the *closet statesman*, compared with Chatham or Burke? What rank is given to the *closet lawyer*, whose name is preserved by the title page of his digests and reports, compared with Cicero, the coruscations of whose genius will not expire till the day that shall quench the constellations?

But what is the warmth that is so indispensable to eloquence? Not *vociferation*. Not violence of any sort. To avoid the reproach of *coldness*, we may assume an *artificial* animation, that is even more frigid than the frigidity we seek to avoid. The raving of the declaimer is not that ethereal flame that kindles from soul to soul. Insanity is not eloquence. The man of mature mind smiles at the admiration, with which a child gazes upon the rocket that explodes in its flight to the clouds; and with the same indifference he views the glare of factitious earnestness, sometimes called oratory; while he is disgusted equally with fervid ignorance, and scholastic apathy. The remedy for both is a mind at once enriched with knowledge, and warmed with genuine emotion.

What then is true earnestness? It is in general, *that excited temperament or state of the soul, which enters with deep interest into a given subject that is to be impressed on others*. Without stating particular reasons here, the fact is unquestionable, that the speaker who lacks this temperament, will be inanimate and powerless. But he who possesses this, combined with other requisites, is listened to with interest, the moment he begins to speak, because he shows that no deadly chill is on

his vitals. He can summon his powers and direct them to a point at pleasure ; because he can endure strong excitement, without the distraction of his faculties. When he rises, and stretches himself, some proof is forth-coming that he is a living man and is awake. His heart beats with a vigorous pulsation, that braces his muscles, gives glow to his conceptions, and meaning to his look. His soul kindles with the impulse of his subject, as he goes on ; and his strength is felt and acknowledged,—acknowledged with a sort of enthusiastic homage, by his fellow-men.

Wright, in his *Philosophy of Elocution*, in urging upon the Christian student of eloquence, “earnestness of manner, and energy of expression,” relates the following :—

“A citizen of Athens came to Demosthenes, and besought him to plead his cause, against one by whom he had been treated with great cruelty. Now the person having made his complaint with an air and style of perfect coldness and indifference, the orator was not inclined to believe him.

“This affair cannot be as you represent it ! You have not suffered hard usage !” Here merely from the want of earnestness and expression, the veracity of the person was disputed ; and that too by Demosthenes. A pathetic address, with finely interwoven phrases, was not essential to convince the orator of the fact. He only required, perhaps, a probable picture of the mind of the sufferer, or an earnest recital of the transaction. — When the orator intimated his disbelief of the fact, Plutarch informs us that the citizen immediately expressed himself with the utmost emotion—“*I not harshly used ! I not ill-treated !*”

Nay, now, says Demosthenes “I begin to believe you—that is the form,—that is the language of an *injured* man. I acknowledge the justice of your cause, and will be your advocate.”

“We shall find the object of this illustration,” continues the author, “shown more at length by the Roman orator.” — — “I perfectly remember,” said Cicero, “that, when Calidius prosecuted Q. Gallius for an attempt to poison him, and pretended that he had the plainest proofs of it, and could produce many letters,

witnesses, informations, and other evidences to put the truth of his charge beyond a doubt, interspersing many sensible and ingenious remarks on the nature of the crime, I remember, that when it came to my turn to reply to him, after urging every argument which the case itself suggested, I insisted upon it as a material circumstance in favor of my client, that the prosecutor while he charged him with a design against his life, and assured us that he had the most indubitable proofs of it then in his hands, related his story with as much ease, and as much calmness and indifference as if nothing had happened.”—“ Would it have been possible,” exclaimed Cicero, (addressing himself to Calidius,) “ that you should speak with this air of unconcern, unless the charge was purely an invention of your own ?—and, above all, that you whose eloquence has often vindicated the wrongs of other people with so much spirit, should speak so coolly of a crime which threatened your life ?”*

In the consideration of this subject, the *CAUSES which influence our intellectual and moral habits*, also demand attention. These include the objects that awaken excitement, and the kind of excitement which they produce.

Eloquence then, does not depend on mechanical or ephemeral excitements, but on great, and permanent, and powerful causes, affecting the intellectual habits of a country or an age, perhaps a series of ages. Look at the facts to which I have before alluded. What produced the mighty effort of eloquence in Athens ? A train of causes that made *mighty* men ; that produced a collision of mighty minds ; that set in motion the intellectual machinery of Greece, and carried the excitement to the highest pitch, when Philip threatened the extinction of her liberties. The convulsions of Rome, as connected with the history of Brutus, and Cæsar, and Anthony, brought Cicero up to that energy and majesty which held in awe the minds of other men. To the events of the American Revolution, our country owes the fame of her Hamilton and Patrick Henry. We do not

* Phil. of Elocution, pp. 198—202.

search for *secular* orators, amid the darkness and despotism of modern Turkey. We do not search for *Christian* orators, amid the ecclesiastical darkness and despotism of the eleventh century. At that period, the moral world was like a vast, dead sea, without a breath of wind to move its surface. In the fifteenth century, a hurricane broke up the repose of these stagnant waters, and from the conflict of elements arose the powerful minds that led on the Reformation.

But in estimating the efficacy of those general causes which give character to an age, or nation, or community of nations, we may be assisted by looking at their influence on single men. Would you learn by what process any individual, who is distinguished by the power of his eloquence, gained that power? You must look back on a *train of causes*, that have combined to shape all the *habits* of his mind. And you will see that the energies of his mind are not awakened at random, but are brought to bear on a single subject according to laws which are applicable to other minds. Take the case of the British Statesman whom I recently mentioned. The love of his country was not in him an occasional emotion, but a steady, deep seated principle. The interests of that country were committed to his special management in a period, when the nations were dashing one against another, in distress and perplexity; and "men's hearts were failing them for fear." The welfare of a great nation at stake calls for expanded views, and great efforts in her prime Minister. This is the subject of his unremitted care; the subject that goes with him to his pillow, that occupies his first waking thoughts, that engrosses his mind in the social circle, and hastens him back to his retirement. Call him now to engage in public debate, on some measure involving this chief subject of his thoughts, and you see the actual result of those intellectual laws, which I wish to illustrate. You see all the man's native and acquired powers thrown into an effort;—all his genius, his knowledge, his patriotism, unite to form one current of argument and emotion, which a host of puny opponents cannot withstand. A mere stranger, in wit-

nessing that effort, would know that powerful causes must have been at work, to *form* the man who made it.

We may take another example from among ourselves. Could an illiterate man have been introduced on the floor of the American Congress, to take part in its debates on the British treaty, he might as well have attempted to form a new planetary system as to make a *speech* like that of Fisher Ames. In Ames himself that speech would have been a miracle, had not a set of causes of long continued and steady operation, united to *create* the man, and confer on him the powers which such an effort demanded. Besides those general principles, under the influence of which a new era was then opening on the world ;—within himself were united a vigorous and cultivated mind ; an easy native elocution ; rapid conception ; vivid imagination ; practice in speaking ; a soul glowing with patriotism, and inspired to high emotion by the subject and the occasion. Here again I say, a mere stranger must have perceived that such an effort was not produced by the transient excitement of a common mind. Just as a stranger in Africa, falling on the banks of the Nile, would know that this river comes from distant mountains, and is fed by many streams ; and would not suspect that it was produced to day by a shower on some adjacent region, or that it will cease to flow to-morrow.

Ames was *thirty eight* when he made that speech. Suppose that some great emergency in the church should require any of you, at the same age, to make a similar effort in your own sacred calling ;—what preparatives are necessary that you may do it with similar success ? Though scarcely one man in a million, has all the native gifts of Ames for high effect in oratory ; yet the question how far you would succeed or fail, in the case supposed, with the talents which you do possess, depends chiefly on the intellectual and moral habits which you are now forming. No momentary incitement would answer on such an occasion. You must act under a *strong, steady* impulse, resulting from principles that have established their permanent influence over your powers.

LECTURE V.

PERSONAL PIETY IN THE PREACHER, ESSENTIAL TO GENUINE ELOQUENCE IN THE PULPIT.

With the foregoing principles in view, I am prepared now to lay down the broad position, that *genuine eloquence in the pulpit, cannot exist without PERSONAL PIETY in the preacher.* Strong as this statement may seem, its truth I presume is unquestionable. To a certain extent, the fundamental principles of oratory are the same in all professions, and at all times ; and thus far the examples I have adduced from secular orators are pertinent to my main purpose ;—but beyond this they fail. Will these examples be said to show that eloquence of the first order *has* existed without piety ? Certainly it has,—but not in the *pulpit*. Great emotion I have said is necessary to produce eloquence, and great objects to produce such emotion. But these objects must correspond with the *governing temper and business* of the speaker. A motive which would kindle the soul of one man, to another may be no motive. Demosthenes and Paul were in some respects kindred spirits. Strong sensibility, fervid imagination, vigorous conception, and bold expression, were characteristic of both. But suppose, that Demosthenes, with an unsanctified heart, could have stood up at Athens or Corinth, to preach the cross of Christ ; would he have been *eloquent* ? To him, as to *later* Greeks, that same subject, which swelled the Apostle's bosom with unutterable emotion, would have been *foolishness*. The secular orator may find objects in mere worldly concerns to awaken his utmost

powers, the interests of his client ; in the senate, the interests of his country may be sufficient for this.

But where shall the *preacher* find objects to stir his soul ? God be thanked that the affairs of courts and cabinets, or even of Popes and hierarchs, no longer furnish topics for the pulpit, since the days are gone by in which the sacred office was made subservient to secular ambition. According to the condition and the taste of modern Christendom, the chief objects that can rouse the preacher to earnestness must be found in his *religion*. But *what* religion ? Not that which radically mistakes the character and obligations of man, and leaves him a stranger to God, and to himself. Not that which covers the pollutions of his heart under plausible names, and promises him heaven without holiness. To such a religion for substance, I grant paganism of old was indebted for the machinery of its *epic poetry*, but not for one splendid effort of its *eloquence*. To a religion more or less nearly approaching this low standard, we must ascribe the lamentable want of fervour, which in different degrees we witness in the pulpit, from the tame, hortatory address, to the frigid, moral essay. With such a religion, the preacher may exhibit genius, erudition, elegance, fluency. But that eloquence which arrests attention, which seizes the heart, which thrills an assembly with awful interest, must have a deeper origin. Its principles are the elements of moral truth, as they are exhibited in the unperverted Gospel of Christ ; such as the character of God, the ruin of man, his dignity and destination as immortal, the scheme of redemption, the office of the Holy Spirit as a sanctifier, and the retributions of the judgment. In what way now, is the preacher without piety to enter into these subjects, with that warmth of interest which their importance demands ? Suppose his faith to be essentially defective on these points ; or suppose him to be destitute of that spiritual sensibility which belongs only to a sanctified heart ; can any artificial process give him animation ? Nothing short of genuine feeling will do it. But he who feels these subjects truly, is a *pious* man. He has been *born* and *taught* from above.

His heart, his studies, his labors are consecrated to God. Fix this man in a city or village pulpit,—he is a *fervent* preacher. Send him to the heathen,—the same holy zeal that glowed in the bosom of Brainard and Martyn, with an inextinguishable flame, gives energy to his ministrations. The amount then is this ; he that would speak with effect in whatever department of elocution, must be *earnest* ; but in the *pulpit* , and on appropriately *Christian subjects* , nothing short of *Christian piety* in the preacher will make him earnest.

As a result of the foregoing principles, I remark that *there is an important sense in which the preacher is under MORAL OBLIGATION to be eloquent.* *Genius* of high order, being an original gift of the Creator, we cannot strictly speaking, say it is his *duty* to possess ; though that *degree* of intellectual strength, which is indispensable to an impressive delivery, ought for other reasons, to be deemed essential in a public teacher, as much certainly, as the gift of speech. The want of either, while it would not imply blame, would exclude from the ministry.

But *qualities of heart* , which the Bible demands in every moral agent, qualities in which the essence of Christian character consists, ought certainly to exist in full strength in the preacher. And the high tone of religious feeling, which he is bound to maintain and to carry into his public ministrations, though it may not render him elegant or sublime, will give him an earnestness and pungency of address, that will infallibly reach the hearts of his hearers. Not to insist then on other qualities which depend on *cultivation* , and of course on the preacher's *will* ; just so far as he fails to be eloquent through want of *EARNESTNESS* , there must be some inexcusable fault in the state of his heart.

A still more important result of the preceding principles is, that *whatever tends to depress the Christian sensibilities of the heart, or in other words to check the spirit of piety, is unfriendly to the cultivation of Christian eloquence.* I can only glance at the *cautions* , which this remark suggests to the young preacher. All those habits of study which are adapted to the

mere acquisition of knowledge, without a proper culture of the heart, must operate to restrain and to diminish the warmth of religious feeling. In this way probably the study of the Bible, only as an *intellectual* exercise, giving scope to philological inquiry, may divest this sacred book of all its sanctifying influence on the student. In the same way, the habit of *examining the doctrines of Christianity, as subjects of speculative curiosity*, with the eye of a critic and a disputant, not regarding their connexion with the interests of practical godliness, tends to supplant those affections of the heart, which are indispensable to the successful *exhibition* of these doctrines in the pulpit. For more obvious reasons still, the practice of *reading works of popular literature for mere amusement*, or even for the purpose of improving the taste or imagination, except to a very limited extent, and under the sanctifying influence of fervent piety, must be prejudicial.* Perhaps too there is one other point of caution more important than any of these, in its practical bearings on ourselves, I mean *a habit of levity in social intercourse*. To some extent this seems to rise spontaneously out of circumstances, among those whose chief business is severe mental application. But while the fatal effects of intense study should certainly be avoided, by a thorough unbending of the mind, at least once a day, this relaxation should be so managed by the Christian student, as not to impair his pious sensibilities. The practice of indulging in jesting and witticism is always attended with danger. There is no rock, if we except heresy and intemperance, on which ministers have oftener made shipwreck. As a warning to such mirth-loving men in the sacred office, the common sense of the world applies to them with unsparing strictness, its own maxim; "He that makes others laugh will seldom make himself respected." If these remarks have any weight in respect to social intercourse, they are much more important in reference to *public exercises*, such as *writing and speaking for rhetorical purposes*, among Christian students.

* For the Author's views of reading works of *fiction*, see Lectures on Homiletics, etc. p. 191.

To a sportive sally of wit, or to cutting irony on some subjects, there can be no objection ; but the habit of associating the interest of such exercises, with their tendency to produce levity, must be attended with deleterious influence. It is not our chief object to promote *fluency* in speaking, much less is it so to promote *flippancy* and *pertness*. Eloquence, such as comports with the purposes of this Seminary, demands dignity of subject, manliness of thought, and more than all, warmth of Christian emotion. No flashes of transient excitement will produce it. There must be a *current* to the soul ; and this in Christian oratory, I say again, can result from nothing but a deep, steady, habitual tone of pious feeling. To this one principle, so far as eloquence is concerned, are we to ascribe the power of preaching in a *revival of religion*. The state of the preacher's heart, sometimes gives to his unstudied address in the conference room, an energy which he could not reach in an age of artificial effort.

Though my remarks on this topic have been so far extended, yet as I know its importance to have been deeply felt by the Founders of this Seminary, it must not be dismissed without a more special application to yourselves, with reference to the study of eloquence. In all the sacrifices incident to frail health and residence among strangers, my heart has been exhilarated in reviewing my relations to this Seminary, not so much from those marks of prosperity which attract public notice,—not so much from the elegance of its buildings, the amount of its funds, or the growing number of its students, as from the decided character of *piety*, which I trust has prevailed within its walls. It is when I think that many young ministers, who are burning and shining lights in our own country ; it is when I look to our Missionary stations abroad, and think that most of those whom the American church has sent to assault the strong holds of paganism, were sons of Andover ;* it is when I recollect that these men, and others of like spirit, once occupied those *rooms* and kneeled in those *closets*, which are consecrated to the same sacred purposes through succeeding generations, that my heart

* This was true, when these Lectures were written.

cleaves with inviolable attachment to this hill of Zion. Just so far as each successive class shall continue to furnish men of this character; and shall give new proof, from year to year, that substantial learning, embellishment of taste, and fervor of holy zeal, may be combined in the ministers of Christ; we have a guarantee that the Simeons and Annas of our churches will continue to pray for us. In different parts of this country, there are many ministers, of solid sense and information, who have risen by the strength of their own character to distinguished usefulness and influence, and that with inferior, early advantages. These ministers, and the body of intelligent Christians with whom they are connected, will give us the aid of their confidence and their prayers, no farther than they see evidence, that literary acquisitions are sanctified by a predominant character of *piety* in our students. God forbid that these churches reared by the Hookers and Mathers of former days, should ever be compelled to choose between fervid ignorance and scholastic apathy in the pulpit. But rely on it, gentlemen, if they are not forsaken by the Holy Spirit, much as they are disposed to cherish Theological Seminaries, these churches, should we drive them to that alternative, will pass by cold scholars, and prefer men of moderate learning, with ardent piety, to be their ministers. So it *will* be; and so it *ought* to be. And could the fathers of New England, and the departed founders of this Seminary, speak from amid the full light which heaven reflects on the interests of the church below, they would doubtless say with one voice, *so let it be*.

On this subject I feel myself to be speaking as one that must give account; speaking to a family of young ministers, in whom a higher stamp of personal religion ought to be expected, than in any other associated circle, of equal numbers, on the globe. To your instructors it has been given in special charge, as their first duty, to make the cultivation of your *piety* an object of unremitted care. Important stations in the church, perhaps my own office, or that of my respected colleagues, may hereafter devolve on some of you; and it should be our most earnest en-

deavor to cherish in you those principles, without which, even in the humblest sphere, we cannot hope to see you useful or happy. You see then, on what my best anticipations as to the spirit of sacred eloquence here are suspended. Could I determine how far the spirit of genuine devotion prevails in your hearts; could I see how far personal ambition is supplanted by the love of Christ and of one another; could I inspect each closet, and take the temperature of each man's piety from day to day;—then I should be satisfied what progress to look for in *that eloquence*, which God will approve, and employ for the advancement of his own cause. O could our fathers, Norris, Abbot, and Spring attend your rhetorical exercises, and among the catalogue of your names, could they fix on *one* who aims to become an eloquent preacher, while he neglects to commune with his own heart, and with his God, in secret, with what eyes think you, would they look on such a son of their Seminary! How especially could his motives bear the inspection of *that eye*, which as a flame of fire searches every heart!

LECTURE VI.

OBSTACLES TO THE CULTIVATION OF ELOQUENCE.—CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR AGE AND COUNTRY FAVORABLE TO IT.

Among the general principles which I propose to discuss, it is proper to consider some things which have been supposed to be, and others which really are, *unfavorable to the cultivation of eloquence*.

The *first* of these is *climate*.

There is a very common opinion that the atmosphere of northern latitudes, must be unfavorable to that *earnestness* which is the soul of oratory. The correctness of this opinion, as it has an important bearing on this subject, in respect to a large part of our own country, ought not to be admitted without examination. It were idle to deny that there is any connexion, between climate and intellectual temperament. We do not look for great mental efforts of any sort, amid the intense frosts of a polar sky, or the suffocating blaze of a vertical sun. But that climate which is favorable to vigor of body and mind; which is adapted to promote long life; and to produce a high tone of intellectual and moral excitement, cannot be unfavorable to eloquence. The same causes that produce great poets, and admirals, and generals; the same causes in short, that produce great *men*, by expanding and elevating the mind to high effort, must be adapted to produce great orators. If we reckon climate among these causes, as certainly we must, then the above opinion, so far at least, as our *own* climate is concerned, is certainly groundless. It would be injustice to our country, to say

Our sons are wanting in energy. Look at the daring enterprise on the ocean and the land, which qualifies them to attempt the most difficult achievements. In an age presenting all the objects to which the action of mind can be applied, and demanding all the vigor and versatility of which it is susceptible, see them become distinguished artisans, merchants, statesmen;—and then ask if such men are not capable of all the spirit, all the enthusiasm which eloquence demands. Whatever deficiency exists then on this subject, it must be ascribed not to our *climate*, but to other causes.

What, moreover, is the testimony of facts? That city which guided the destinies of the ancient world, and, with her four millions of inhabitants, was herself guided by the eloquence of one man, has had no such man among all her generations of modern ages. The glory of *eternal Rome*, amid the mouldering monuments of her magnificence is her *name*, and the memory of what she *was*. Yet she stands in the same *latitude* as when she was mistress of the world; and this latitude is the same with a trifling difference, with that of the present capital of New England. The eloquence of Pericles and Phocion seems still to echo in our ears, like the sound of thunder dying away in the distant horizon. Yet the descendants of these men occupying the same ground, and breathing the same air, are literally servants of barbarians.* Such facts are not to be explained by any unfavorable change in the *climate* of these countries; on the contrary the climate is unquestionably warmer now than formerly, and consequently, if the opinion we are examining is correct, is more favorable to the highest efforts of eloquence. The winter at Rome, for centuries after it was built, had often great severity. The freezing of the Tiber is mentioned by Juvenal as a common event. He characterizes a superstitious woman, as breaking the ice of that river that she might perform her ablutions. “Many passages of Horace suppose the streets of Rome to be full of ice and snow.”

* Written before the recent Greek revolution.

Rivers which are never frozen in modern times, were crossed by the Roman armies on solid bridges of ice. At present, it would be as strange for the Tyber to be frozen as the Nile." Why does not *modern Rome* produce orators? The answer is to be found, not in the influence of climate, but in a combination of causes, resulting in a state of society, that has stifled the noblest powers of the mind, and made *dwarfs* of those whose forefathers were *giants*. And why, I ask again, if the fire of genius is to be graduated according to parallels of latitude, why have not India and Africa produced orators of the first distinction? Has the inspiration of eloquence in those countries, been checked by the influence of a frosty atmosphere? Talent of every kind, as hitherto exhibited in the affairs of our globe, has been chiefly confined to countries within its *northern temperate zone*; because such have been the arrangements of Providence, that here have existed the most powerful causes to produce vigor of intellect, and ardor of emotion. And certainly it is reasonable to suppose that, for a century to come, these causes will not be found to operate in any other country more strongly than in our own.

It seemed proper to bestow so much attention on this topic as to place it in its just light; because if orators, like tropical fruits, can be produced only in warm climates, it is in vain to look for them in northern latitudes. However common this opinion may have been, it deserves to be contradicted; because it is at variance with philosophy and fact; and because it tends to discourage manly effort, where such effort promises most of all to be successful.

Should it be still demanded, 'are not the most *vigorous powers of imagination* unquestionably found in *hot* climates rather than *cold*?'—I answer, they are found, not in the extremes of either. Let facts decide. The '*father of poetry*' flourished in about the same latitude, that divides the territory of the United States midway from north to south. The second great poet that the world has produced, lived in nearly the same latitude with ourselves; and the third, considerably farther

north. If the comparison were extended to distinguished poets of a lower rank, it would probably appear that scarcely one tenth of these, have lived in countries as far south as the native region of Homer. Without farther remark then, we may dismiss the objection arising from our climate, as destitute of solid foundation.

But a *second* obstacle to the cultivation of eloquence, and one to which we must attach very serious importance, *arises from the character of modern literature.*

I have had occasion to revert often to one grand principle, namely, that eloquence will be most cultivated where it has most influence. Accordingly we find that among ancient nations, with whom not common business merely, but the concerns of states, of philosophy, of religion, all depended on *oral address*, the gift of speaking was studied with great assiduity. Knowledge was chiefly acquired by the *ear*. But for several centuries past, the *eye* has been the main organ of instruction, and the influence which one mind exerts over others, has been principally through the medium of the pen and the press, that is, in respect to objects of chief interest with the great public. Among the ancients, common people had no access to books. The philosopher, the statesman, the general, could not sit down coolly in the closet, and commit to the press and to the post his reasonings or his remonstrances, to be read by thousands at their leisure. A public assembly must be convened, to hear the orator's arguments from his own lips; and that with all the increase of excitement, which results from the social sympathies of such an assembly. In this way even written history, was made public; as we are assured that of Herodotus was recited at the Olympic games. These causes operated powerfully to produce orators. When it was given out that Demosthenes was to speak, a vast concourse flocked together, from the extremities of Greece. Suppose now, that the art of *printing* had existed there; and that every man in Greece might have had opportunity to *read* that oration, at home; you see the impulse that summoned the population of a country together,

suspended; you see Demosthenes lose half his hearers; probably, half the fire, and certainly half the effect and fame of his eloquence.

This point is introduced here, only for the sake of suggesting its connexions with the character of modern literature. The facilities which art has devised for the multiplication of books, have given a new direction to the intellectual pursuits of men. Study, in the strictest sense of the term, occupies a much wider range than it anciently did. In acquiring a finished education, a far greater proportion of time is devoted to abstruse sciences; and especially since so much progress has been made in applying these to practical uses in the arts of life. All this has a tendency to extend and enrich the field of knowledge; but at the same time, it gives a certain rigidity to the temperament of the mind, and makes *readers* and *thinkers*, rather than *speakers*. Our systems of education, (and the same is true of all modern systems,) are almost exclusively devoted to the discipline of intellect, while they fail to cultivate sensibility and emotion. Even the formation of a good *taste* has scarcely been among the objects of serious regard in our literary institutions. With so much to repress and so little to cherish, the spirit of oratory in our Colleges, it is wonderful that so many of our young men, rather than that so few, break through these obstacles and become good speakers. What progress should we expect in *languages*, for example, from that youth whose lessons should recur but once in a month, or once in six months? And why should we preposterously demand skill in *elocution*, from him who has been called to exercise his powers of speaking, only at similar intervals, through his whole course of education? No man now, in the forming age, bestows one *twentieth part* of the pains on this subject, that made the eloquent men of antiquity.

As a result of the foregoing causes, we see why the eloquence of the ancients compared with that of the moderns, was eminently of the *popular* kind; adapted to the common sense, and to the hearts of men. Such was the simplicity of their institutions, that Cicero said, amidst all his avocations, he could

in a few days, acquire the knowledge necessary for a Roman lawyer. Of course their lives were not consumed in the study of abstract principles, nor their eloquence confined to a detail of dry *facts* and *statutes*. The liberty, prosperity, and honour of their country, were plain subjects of common interest, suited to expand and invigorate genius, and to inspire sublimity and pathos.

I may add, the *taste* and *habits* of the ancients produced orators;—ours *cold reasoners*. Their public speakers sought to agitate and inflame; ours seek to *convince* merely, by arguments addressed to the intellect. The bold use of apostrophe and personification, by which Demosthenes and Cicero raised the dead, made brutes speak, and rocks listen, and weep; would be ventured upon with little prospect of success, by modern orators. Indeed, such is the change of public taste, that their vehemence of action, their smiting of the forehead and thigh, and stamping with the foot, would hardly be endured in a modern assembly.

These considerations may perhaps account for the fact, that the sublime and impassioned eloquence which prevailed in Athens and Rome, has flourished less in later ages. For the same reasons Britain and these United States, and in a less degree France, are the only countries in modern times, whose institutions and manners are favorable to its cultivation. The popular eloquence of France, excepting that of the pulpit, has been depressed by the absence of civil liberty. In spite of obstacles, the British Mansfield and Burke, the elder and younger Pitt, with several others that might be named, have carried the eloquence of the Senate to a high pitch. Perhaps a moderate share of enthusiasm, might lead a poet to say,—it is

“Praise enough

“To fill the ambition of a common man,

“That *Chatham's* language was his mother tongue.”

Lord Lyttleton, the younger, who was at once a distinguished example of fine taste, and of depravity, said, “The two principal orators of the present age are the Earls of Mansfield

and Chatham. The former is a great man; *Ciceronian*, but I should think inferior to Cicero. The latter is a greater man; *Demosthenian*, but superior to Demosthenes. The first formed himself on the model of the great Roman orator; he studied, translated, rehearsed, and acted his orations. The second disdained imitation, and was himself a model of eloquence, of which no idea can be formed but by those who have heard him. His words have sometimes frozen my young blood into stagnation, and sometimes made it pace in such a hurry through my veins, that I could scarce support it. He however, embellished his ideas by classical amusements, and occasionally read the sermons of Barrow, which he considered as a mine of nervous expressions; but he borrowed his noblest images from the language of inspiration."

Nor need we hesitate to rank with these great models both of parliamentary and forensic eloquence, the American Hamilton and Ames. Concerning the *former* of these, we may say, consistently with all proper abatement for national predilections, that in respect to versatility and compass of intellect, united with an elegant and powerful elocution, he is to be classed with the very first order of men. And concerning the latter, it is safe to affirm, that if he was second to Hamilton, he has had very few superiors, in any age or country.

I come now to mention some things in the character of our age and of our country, that are *favorable to the cultivation of eloquence*, especially in the *pulpit*.

No adequate view of this topic can be taken, without glancing at the prominent principles which are now operating on the affairs of the world. In looking forward on the probable character of our country, there are some things, if I mistake not, which wear an aspect decidedly favorable to the cause of sacred eloquence.

First rate orators, we have no reason to expect will ever be common in the pulpit. They have never been common in any profession. The qualities necessary to confer eminence in this art, are more various, and more rarely combined in the same

individual, than those which are necessary to make great men in other departments of human action. Hence, among all the past generations of the world, only a very few names can properly be ranked in this class. It is an unreasonable demand made by many, who have little acquaintance with the subject, that our public seminaries should furnish all their pupils, with gifts of elocution of that high order, which only a small number in any age have attained. To admit that but few great orators have arisen in this nation, is only to admit what has been generally true of other nations, at least of our cotemporaries. Nay, it may without scruple be affirmed, that no other country ancient or modern, at so early a period of its existence, has produced so many good speakers as ours.

That we may judge how far it is reasonable to look for advances in sacred eloquence, we must consider at some length, to what extent the civil and religious characteristics of the age, will probably *modify* the influence of the Christian ministry.

That debasement of the human mind which began with the decline of the Roman empire, lasted for many dreary ages. It was aggravated by the Feudal system, and finally was consummated by the monstrous usurpations of the Papal Hierarchy. The same combination of causes which filled Europe with castles and petty despots, created universal ignorance, and anarchy, and rapine.

In that succession of signal events, which included the invention of printing, and of the mariner's compass, the discovery of America, and the Protestant Reformation, the profound darkness of preceding centuries was gradually dispelled. These were directly preparatory to the new period which is now opening on the world.

The first grand result of these causes was the settlement of this country. Our political institutions did not result from accident, nor from transient impulses. They grew out of principles deep rooted in the Saxon race; principles which had been gradually matured and developed in the land of our progenitors, amid convulsions that often shook the foundations of society;

principles which had been sanctified by the best blood of the country, poured out at the stake and on the scaffold, which in the face of arbitrary power, had waxed bolder by conflict, and acquired new strength in many a dubious and sanguinary struggle. The spirit of British liberty, enlightened by the gospel, invigorated by its hopes, and contending for privileges a thousand times more precious than those which inspired the intrepidity of Roman heroes, could not be resisted. Cæsar, at the summit of his power, and with all his armed legions could not have crushed this spirit. So God in his wisdom would have it, that the infatuated councils of Europe exiled her noblest sons, to establish an empire in the west. And by such a discipline, our Puritan ancestors, and the French Protestants, who fled to this country, were prepared for the mighty enterprise before them.

The next grand result of these causes, was the independence of the United States; an event, which after the experience of half a century, it is not extravagant to believe is fraught with consequences, of which the men who achieved it had little conception. The prospect of stability to our institutions rests on circumstances which I have no time to notice, except to say that they are such as have never attended any former experiment in behalf of a popular government. But there are several characteristics, which are directly connected with my present inquiry. The *first* is, that our government is founded on public opinion. The *second* is, that this public opinion, to be a substantial basis of prosperity, must be guided by the influence of religion. The *third* is, that this religious influence must be created and sustained *chiefly* through the instrumentality of an enlightened and powerful Christian ministry. It were easy to show that the systems of education, the literature and taste in which Christian countries so far surpass others, are to be ascribed in no small measure, to men in the sacred profession. But I do not so much refer to that influence, which bears on the mass of a community, from its public literature and its educated men, as to that *direct* influence, which is ex-

erted by religious teachers. Public preaching is the system which infinite wisdom devised for the general instruction of the world. By this means multitudes in the common ranks of life, may gain at little expense, such a fund of knowledge as they have no opportunity to acquire from books, or from any other source. From the pulpit they may be taught to *think*, to *reason*, and what is more, to *feel* and *act* as becomes men. Facts speak distinctly on this subject. Take the map of the world, and put down your finger on those regions where the common people regularly attend on the instructions of well qualified Christian teachers, and these you see are the same regions, where the common people are most distinguished for good sense, sobriety of morals, and general strength of character. Gross vices shrink away from such an influence with tenfold more certainty, than from the most elaborate systems of jurisprudence, or the severest inflictions of penal statutes.

We may apply these principles, in estimating the aspects of this age as related to sacred eloquence. The world has seen an influence of the clergy, which for ages triumphed in its ascendancy over human minds; an influence, however, not resulting from intellectual or moral elevation in those who filled the sacred office, but from the degradation of other men. Without looking back on the revolting scenes of the dark ages, let *Spain* during the last century, stand as an example of what I mean. Her clergy had almost unlimited control over popular opinion and feeling. This could not be ascribed to their superior intelligence; nor to the weight of their moral character, for as a body they were grossly deficient in both these respects. Nor could it be ascribed to the purity of their *doctrines*, or the power of their *ministrations*; for the authority of the Gospel was subordinated to that of the *church*, and its glory was obscured by a mummerly of senseless ceremonies. To what then was this ascendancy owing? To the ignorance of the people; and thence to a childish credulity and superstition; the same as gives ascendancy to the necromancer over untaught minds. This popular ignorance grew out of despotic government, dread-

ing the diffusion of intellectual light, and associating with itself a religion and a priesthood congenial to its purposes.

Suppose now the superincumbent weight of these mountains piled on wretched Spaniards to be removed, and a free government to succeed their despotism. These shapes of human beings by degrees become men. Their souls rise and expand; they think, and reason, and claim to themselves the attributes of an individual and independent existence. Just in the same proportion, this priesthood, with its farago of rites, its wafers and beads, its crucifixes and consecrated water, goes down to insignificance. Such a revolution, not in the condition of Spain only, but of the nations generally where absolute governments exist, the aspect of the times leads us to look for, as a probable event. The train has long been laid, and the progress towards such a result has been steady and obvious, especially since the period of our own national independence.

Let the question return then, in reference to these United States, on what footing hereafter must the influence of the Christian ministry rest? All sources of influence, according to the genius of our institutions, are accommodated to one predominant principle, the force of public opinion. As belonging to a great community of freemen, every one claims to himself the rights of a man, and is bound to acknowledge no sovereignty over his faith, his conscience, or his actions, but the necessary obligations of duty. Others may lament, if they will, that a factitious reverence for the clergy no longer exists; but with all my repugnance to that reckless spirit of innovation, which sometimes tramples with undistinguishing foot, on what is venerable as well as what is worthless, I thank God, that the human mind is raised from the degradation of past ages, so that it will not bow to any dictation of mere authority, nor to any figment of superstition. Henceforth the preacher's influence must depend, not on his official title, not on his cassock or band, but on *himself*. His control over the opinions of others, will be just according to the purity and power with which he preaches the gospel.

I have extended these remarks thus far, because they prepare the way for that result which I wish briefly and prominently to state. If the above views are just, a new era is opening for sacred eloquence. Besides the circumstances which I have mentioned, arising from the intellectual character of the age, and the free institutions of our country, as adapted to promote elevation of motive and effort in the preacher ; I add briefly that powerful *moral* causes conspire greatly to increase this tendency. Let any man maturely reflect on the combination of moral influences, that have come down to us from the Protestant Reformation, through our Saxon ancestors, especially the fathers of the Plymouth colony ; then let him look at the tide of Christian benevolence which set in upon the world, during the closing years of the last century ; let him begin with the formation of the London Missionary Society, and see following in rapid succession the Bible Society, the Tract Society, the Sabbath School system, the mighty enterprise of Foreign and of Home Missions ; and then let him ask, whose work it is to organize and to keep in operation, this immense machinery ? It is the work of Christian ministers ; it is theirs so preeminently, that if they withdraw from it, the whole movement will stop. But how is their influence to bear upon the world, so as to sustain and accelerate this movement ? Not by the reputation of profound scholarship, but by the power of argument and persuasion which they can wield in the pulpit. Hence it is, that the spirit of the age calls for the cultivation of that eloquence which appeals to the *heart*, or which is properly termed *popular*. Men may listen to an address on some abstract subject, and may call it eloquent, though it awakens no emotion, and touches no spring of action ; but it is *not* eloquent unless it stirs the hearers, by pressing conscience, rousing passion, and urging home something to be *done*.

On this principle, the characteristics of this age are eminently favorable to the eloquence of the pulpit. It is an age of stir and excitement ; mind is acting on mind ; and the mass of intelligence acquires momentum by its own action. Since the

world began, so many and so powerful causes have never been brought to operate on a whole community, as those which conspire to promote expansion and vigor of intellect in this country. Reverence for authority and names is passing away. Influence, so preposterously and so long allied to *birth* and *wealth*, must find its chief resources here, in *mind* and *moral character*. And if the fair fabric which the hand of God has begun to rear is not destined to untimely ruin,—if this great people are not to be given up to the reprobation of heaven, the mighty system of argument and motive which the gospel combines, and which it is the province of sacred eloquence to enforce on the hearts of men, never found so perfect a theatre for its appropriate influence as our country presents. But then the minister of the gospel, that he may magnify his office in an age of intellectual action and enterprise, must not only keep pace with the general progress of mind, but must apply all his energies and acquisitions to his *own sacred work*, and from motives peculiar to his own holy religion. And let every preacher settle it with himself as a maxim, that gifted as he may be with intellectual and moral endowments, the amount of his influence must depend chiefly on his *pen* and his *tongue*.

LECTURE VII.

PREPARATORY PRACTICE IN ELOCUTION.—OBJECTIONS.— DIRECTIONS.

The next point to which our attention will be directed, is the *utility of preparatory exercises in elocution*.

The remarks which I have to make on this part of the subject, will be thrown into the form of *reply to several objections*, which have been made against such exercises.

The *first objection* is one that is often heard in this indefinite form; "It is weight and warmth of thought, that does execution in the pulpit; he who feels will of course speak *feelingly*; to exhibit the *appearance* of being in earnest, all he needs is to *be* so in reality. But this quality must be inherent in the man, and can never be conferred by preparatory study and practice in speaking."

There is some confusion in the premises, which invalidates the conclusion. Feeling is certainly the great secret of eloquence; all other things cannot atone for its absence. But in execution, the *power of emotion* in a speaker often depends absolutely on *practice in speaking*. Want of skill may ruin feeling in him who might speak with great earnestness, if he had the command of his powers.

Let us take an illustration from the *military art*. Courage and muscular strength are the grand elements of a soldier. These must be in the *man*, and cannot be produced by any process of drilling. True:—but does it follow that drilling and skill in tactics are useless to a soldier? He is a new recruit. He has

never seen an enemy :—has never been taught to march, to wheel, to fire, to charge with bayonet :—has never heard the roar of cannon, nor the “horrible discord” of “arms on armour clashing.” Full of courage as he was in camp, lead him into *battle*, thus inexperienced, and he fights not at all, or fights to no purpose ; he knows not what he is doing.

Now apply the illustration. The objection supposes that all which the young preacher needs, is deep *feeling*. No matter about discipline in *speaking*, or even in the use of *language*, for this must be useless too, on the same principle. Suppose this preacher to have a good understanding and a warm heart. In the *study* he has deep feeling, but place him in the *pulpit*, and he loses, not his feeling merely, but perhaps his consciousness of existence. He has never looked an assembly in the face ;—he is dashed at the multitude of eyes directed towards himself ;—he is startled at the sound of his own voice. How vain it is to talk of *feeling* in this man ! His heart swells and palpitates indeed, but with other emotions than those which are the result of piety or the spring of eloquence.

A *second objection*, nearly related to the foregoing is this ; Though skill is necessary to give scope to feeling, yet the practice of speaking only for the sake of learning to speak, *injures* feeling, and produces habits of formality ; so that it is better on the whole to defer all attempts to acquire a good elocution till one enters on the actual profession of public speaking.

I wish to state this objection in all its strength, and while I admit a real difficulty in the case, it will be easy to maintain that the remedy proposed by the objector, is inconsistent both with common sense and experience.

It is inconsistent with *common sense*. The art of rhetorical *reading* is a branch of elocution which requires *feeling*. Will it be said, in the spirit of this objection, that the only way to be sure of reading well, is to avoid learning to read ? Suppose that on the *fourth* of July, it is proposed to have that celebrated state paper, the “Declaration of Independence,” *read* to a great assembly ; and the design is to inspire the bosoms of the

hearers with the noble spirit of patriotism which that instrument breathes ; who shall be selected as the reader ?—A novice in reading ? or one who has been well instructed, and has acquired an animated and impressive manner ? The same inquiry would apply to the delivery of an oration, or to any other rhetorical exercise. If *neglect* of discipline in elocution, is the surest way to make one eloquent, when he comes into the profession of public speaking, why have not the American pulpit, and bar, and senate always been filled with preeminent speakers ? Will it be said by any one that there has not been neglect *enough* to produce this result ? It is contrary to the analogies of all human affairs, to suppose that ignorance and indifference concerning any art, should qualify men to excel in it. Where for example, would common sense teach us to look for skilful *navigators* ? Not among the peasants of the Alps, or of the Arabian Desert, but among men accustomed to the ocean, and trained to the art of navigation from early life. Where do we look for skill in *architecture* ? Not among the woods and mud cottages of Canada ; but in populous cities, where elegance in building calls for the cultivation of genius and taste in the architect, who aspires to eminence in his profession. And where, for the same reasons, should we expect to find *orators* ? Certainly where oratory has most influence, and is most cultivated in young men, as a branch of regular training for public life.*

* It is objected against the *preparatory study* of eloquence, that both oratory and poetry have reached their highest point in all countries, before theoretic principles have been studied in form ; and that they have always declined, after criticism has promulgated its canons. I say, 1. Orators and poets rise in a country just when it is in a condition to invigorate and expand men's minds, and awaken all their energies. 2. From this period they decline. 3. After this decline, criticism and taste of an intellectual cast may still exist, though the fire of genius is gone. 4. Such criticism, though it cannot create the fire of genius, is not to be made accountable for its decline ; this is to be explained by more general causes.

The fact however is not as alleged, in all its extent. The oratory of Greece reached its height in Demosthenes, who died the same year with Aristotle—her greatest critic. Isocrates was also cotemporary with Demosthenes. The eloquence of Rome reached its height

So then, it is said, you will make an orator by *rule*, will you? Just as I would make any other man by rule, where genius and sensibility need to be guided by elementary principles, and disciplined into skill by the gradual transformation of practice. There is an ancient maxim, "Every *log* is not a Mercury,"—which applies to this, as well as to other subjects. And he who can tell us that eloquence is not to be produced by art, without genius, has made as profound a discovery as he who could tell us that an orator is not a chair or table;—or that the carpenter's axe cannot hew a log into a divinity. But when it is admitted concerning any one, that the Creator of all things has made him a *man*, the question remains how far does it depend on this man, to make himself an orator?

I say then, in the next place, the objection is contrary to *experience*. No man is *born* an orator, any more than he is born a perfect man in other respects. How does his body attain stature and strength? By daily food and exercise from childhood. How does he learn to use his *hands*?—By *using* them. How does he acquire the power of speech?—By *speaking*. How is the *soldier*, (if I may again draw illustration from his profession,) how is the soldier prepared to scale a rampart, or to climb a mountain? By sitting still till he is called to march on a campaign? No more is the orator qualified to enter on the field of his public vocation, without preparatory discipline of his faculties. If it were a fact, that they are the most successful speakers in actual life, who have most *neglected* such discipline, it would form a strange exception, as I before said, to all the analogies of human affairs. But it is *not* a fact. What did the great masters of antiquity do and teach on this subject? I need not repeat the statements more than once made concerning them, in other parts of this discus-

in Cicero; and its poetry in Virgil, Horace, and Ovid. Yet Cicero and Horace were master critics. These facts show that criticism, which is only the application of reason and common sense to the action of genius, has no more tendency to extinguish it, than the control of the ship's rudder has to destroy the propelling power of the wind, or of a steam engine.

sion. Every scholar knows, with what ardor they pursued the study and practice of oratory from early youth. All the first orators of Greece and Rome were formed in this manner. Both Horace and Juvenal refer to a custom among the Roman youth, of rehearsing original compositions and select passages from the poets. Cresollius says that the *Phonasiæ*, a kind of teachers whose business was to regulate vocal modulation, were employed by the highest classes of people; that these teachers instructed their pupils in the varieties of strong and gentle tones, corresponding with various emotions; that Augustus had been accustomed to these exercises, with a view to acquire suavity and propriety of elocution; and that Nero bestowed incredible pains on the cultivation of his voice. He says that men distinguished for intelligence, and loaded with public honors, were in the practice of frequently declaiming; and that Tully never omitted this practice for a single day, even after he reached the head of his profession, and was acknowledged by all to be the *king of orators*. Suetonius confirms the statement of Cresollius respecting Cæsar, that from his early youth he assiduously, (*laboriosissime* is his word,) cultivated eloquence. Even at the head of an army, and amid the hurry of a campaign, he daily maintained the practice of declaiming in his tent. Though not deficient in powers of extemporary address, he never trusted himself in speaking to the Senate, to the people, or to the soldiers, without composing what he was to say, and then committing it to memory, and carefully rehearsing it beforehand.

Efforts of the same sort, in modern times, few as they are and comparatively limited in extent, have been attended with similar success.

By the aid of a Rhetorical Society, established about the middle of the last century, in the University of Dublin, some of the most eloquent men of modern times have been produced, men who have gained the first honors of the British empire.*

* Mr. Canning's success as a public speaker, and a political man, was owing in no small degree to his early practice in speaking, as a member of a debating society in London, to which he belonged while studying law in the Middle Temple.

In our own country, too, I presume the fact is a very general one, that those who have become distinguished speakers, began to give promise of such distinction, in the efforts of early life.*

The result is, that the objection cannot be well grounded;—for though a young man, through some great fault in his instructors or in himself, may mismanage his faculties and acquire bad habits in speaking, it is preposterous to say that he must shun this danger, by never using his faculties in speaking, till he comes into *actual business*. Individuals I have known, who from conviction, or indolence, or diffidence, have embraced such an opinion, but their subsequent character has furnished little proof that the opinion was a wise one. It is just as absurd to suppose that a young man can learn to speak well without speaking, as to suppose that he might learn to *walk*, without *walking*.

But I have admitted that there is a real *difficulty* connected with these preparatory exercises in elocution, of which I shall be expected to take some notice. The difficulty is this;—there is a constant tendency in young speakers to be artificial in manner, from the fact that they so often speak without object, and without interest. To obviate this difficulty, I will now suggest some *directions* which have occurred to me, in the course of much observation on the subject.

The *first* direction is,—Let your tones, attitudes, and gesture be so completely your own, that is, so inwrought into your habits, as to cost you no reflection at the time of speaking. But how is this familiarity of habit to be acquired? Just as the soldier learns to *march* without reflecting on the accent of the drum or the length of his step. Just as skill in any other art is attained,—by *practice*. And as the poet says of *knowledge*, I would say in this case,—‘a *little*’ practice is a dangerous thing. It brings a man at the moment of execution, to keep up a comparison between his *practice* and his *rules*; and this infallibly creates awkwardness in all cases. The man who enters or leaves

* Alexander Hamilton.

a room by *rule*, or gives you the common salutation of civility by *rule*, shows you that he is a rustic, practising the lessons of politeness. Is politeness then without rules?—No; the gentleman is such, not from mechanical application of these rules, but because they have been gradually inwrought into his habits, by intercourse with cultivated society. In the same way the orator is formed, not accidentally, not mechanically; but by the gradually transforming influence of *practice*. This enables him to correct what is amiss, and to confirm what is right in his elocution; and to speak spontaneously as the best rules require without recollecting, at the time, that such rules exist. But this supposes *much* practice. No man overcomes a bad habit as to voice or gesture, or forms a good one, without systematic and persevering effort.

Heretofore, theological students, living with private teachers, have had no opportunity for preparatory practice in speaking, except perhaps the attention, (in many cases certainly, the very inadequate attention,) which they had given to the subject in their academical course. Hence the habits with which they entered the pulpit have cleaved to them for life. Here and there one has had soul enough to burst through all difficulties;—while some from indolence, some from diffidence, and some from serious persuasion, that all attention to manner, is beneath the business of an ambassador from heaven, have never attempted to speak well;—or have tamely relinquished the desire of improvement, after a few feeble and fruitless endeavors.

Secondly,—Aim to choose a subject in which you feel, at least for the time being, a *strong interest*. Such a subject you ought to find, or you will not speak earnestly. Such a subject you *can* find, certainly two or three times in a year, or you ought not to be a minister in the *nineteenth* century.

Thirdly,—When you have chosen your subject, take some happy moment, in which the mind is awake, and write upon it. Do this at least one fortnight before you are to speak. Not to dwell on the advantages of prompt and seasonable preparation in cases of this sort, let me only say, that by delaying to write

till the last moment, you gain nothing in *time*, and you lose much in other respects. Because it is too late to commit your composition to memory, you *read* it; or else speak with such laborious recollection, as withdraws your whole mind from the sentiment, and fixes it in anxious suspense on the hazard of losing the order of words. This is the worst predicament, in which a student of oratory can place himself. To *read* in such a case is bad enough, but to speak with a hesitating memory, is the certain way to make no advances except in bad habits. Yet not a few Christian students keep their minds in this sad condition from year to year, that they are never ready for an exercise till the hour comes, or perhaps till a week afterwards.

Fourthly,—Cultivate susceptibility of emotion, or the habit of commanding and concentrating your powers at pleasure. Keep your intellect and heart in the state of good fuel, ready to take fire and blaze where there is occasion. The man who is so sluggish in temperament, that he cannot enter with strong interest into the feelings of Brutus or Anthony, at the funeral of Caesar, cannot be eloquent.

Fifthly,—Study *directness* of address, as a habit. Speak as though words were confined to move in *right lines*, the shortest course to their object. It is said of Massillon that in his greatest efforts, "every expression was a javelin thrown at the heart." To attain this quality, study the Bible, study men, study yourself.

Sixthly,—Cultivate a manly desire to improve by the friendly remarks of others. A fastidious self-complacency, or a sickly delicacy, that cannot be told a fault, forbids manly effort, and valuable improvement in speaking.

Finally,—Resolve to be a good speaker, and act accordingly. The same pride that refuses to correct faults by any process that exposes them, often betrays its weakness by looking with an eye of affected and self-complacent scornfulness on the efforts for their correction, which are made by others. But this is not the spirit that has made eminent men in any profession. In war, in politics, in Christian enterprise, it is a maxim worthy

of this age, "Expect great things, attempt great things." And surely it cannot be thought unworthy of the Christian scholar to aim, and to declare that he does aim, to acquire an impressive elocution, when all admit that this, in the pulpit, is the prime instrument of his usefulness, and most admit that he must acquire it in early life or never.

LECTURE VIII.

STRENGTH OF VOICE. INCONVENIENCES OF A FEEBLE VOICE. ON WHAT STRENGTH OF VOICE DEPENDS.

Among the prime requisites of a good delivery, it is essential that the speaker be heard with ease and pleasure. To accomplish this, he must employ a *proper strength of enunciation*. When I speak of a strong voice, however, I must not be understood to confound *vociferation* with *eloquence*. This absurd mistake, though often made by speakers and hearers of a certain class, is seldom made by men of discernment.

That voice is loud enough, in any given case, which perfectly reaches a whole assembly, with a reserve of strength to enforce an energetic passage, in a manner corresponding with the emotions of the speaker. We will now enquire in the

First place, *what are some of the inconveniences to which a feeble voice subjects a public speaker?*

When he labors under this difficulty to a considerable extent, either he will not be heard at all, and so his discourse will be absolutely lost, or what is more common, he will be heard partially and with difficulty.

Now *laborious listening* excites impatience in a hearer, that often amounts to vexation. It gives pain by *sympathy*; as he who listens shares in the fatigues which is apparently endured by the speaker. It gives pain too as a *mental labor*, in which the invention and industry of the hearer, are kept on the stretch to make out by construction, the sense of that which was uttered so imperfectly, as to reach his ear only in disjointed parts.

When this difficulty is perceived to result from the want of vital strength, it awakens pity. When it is supposed, as it commonly is, and often with too much reason, to result from a sluggish soul, it awakens feelings of another sort, differing in degree from *uneasiness* to *indignation*. I have known more than one instance, where a young man, in his first public performance as a speaker, perhaps in a commencement oration, failed so utterly in powers of voice, as to produce not only sneers at the time, but a permanent disgust, which the hearers afterwards associated with the recollection of his name. The rule of the Roman critic as to perspicuity of style, common sense applies to the voice of a speaker; it should not only be possible to hear him, (excepting indeed those who are deaf,) but *impossible not* to hear him.

Besides the pleasure which a powerful voice gives to an assembly, for reasons implied in the above remarks, it is associated with impressions of dignity and weight. Its grave and manly tones seem better adapted to the character of an orator, than those which are shrill and feeble.

But there are several *circumstances*, from which the inconvenience of a weak voice is liable more especially to be felt.

One is the *injudicious structure* of churches, and other edifices; the primary design of which is to accommodate an assembly in listening to one speaker. On a thorough examination of this subject, to which I was called many years ago, I was surprised to find that edifices of this sort, have generally been erected with very little intelligent regard to the principles of *acoustics*; so that no architect with whom I conversed, even pretended to know why one edifice designed for public speaking, is more favorable to the sound of the voice, than another; except that *size* was generally regarded as having an important influence in the case. Doubtless this is important, for the immoderate compass to which these buildings are sometimes extended, through ostentation or bad judgment, renders it impossible that their remotest parts should be reached, by a voice of any ordinary power. But this is not the whole ground of difficulty;

for we find, as a matter of fact, that a room of moderate extent is sometimes very unfavorable, while a large one is sometimes very favorable to the voice of a speaker. In the structure of churches, particularly, other things are of more consequence than size. Vogue in dress may vary with every change of the moon, and the inconvenience be comparatively trifling ; but the freaks of fashion should hardly be permitted to regulate the principles of architecture, especially in the structure of buildings that are to last for ages ; and the main purpose of which cannot properly be sacrificed to the claims of a capricious taste.

By far the most serious mistake in the structure of churches, is the excessive height to which the ceiling is carried, by reason of which the impulse of the voice escapes upward, so as to fall with very diminished effect upon the body of an assembly below. In other cases, arches are so unskilfully formed, as to return a strong but broken echo, confounding all distinctness of sound. In other cases, the same mischief arises from the structure of galleries, and the appendage of a sounding board, placed immediately over the speaker's head, so as to return a strong, instant echo to his own ear, without any imaginable benefit to the audience. Any or all these disadvantages, I may add, it is not unusual to see aggravated by an elevation of the pulpit so extreme, as to direct the range of the speaker's voice quite above the assembly he is addressing. It is indeed surprising, that a fault in architecture so obvious as this, should yet be so common.

On the other hand, the preacher is exposed to difficulties, which rarely await any other public speaker. In new countries especially he may be called to speak in the open air ; or in private dwellings, where the noise is impeded by partitions, and the elasticity of the air is destroyed by a crowd of hearers.—The great inconvenience which always attends a feeble voice is liable to be much increased, in individual cases, by circumstances like the foregoing.

There is one other disadvantage to which such a voice almost infallibly subjects a speaker, the adoption of a key so high,

as not only to destroy all interesting variety of modulation, but to exhaust and endanger the lungs. But on this topic I only touch here, as I must soon introduce it in another connexion.

Our SECOND inquiry is, *on what does strength of voice depend?* It depends,

1. *On perfect organs of speech.*

These my limits do not allow me to describe at length. But while the vagrant musician must tune his instrument, before he can use it, and must understand its principles before he can tune it; it is indeed surprising that those wonderful organs on which the faculty of speech depends, should be so little understood, even by public speakers. The study which led David to exclaim; "I am fearfully and wonderfully made;" and even Galen, a heathen anatomist, to write a hymn in praise of the Creator, surely must deserve attention from the Christian philosopher, especially the *preacher*, with whose chief duties it is so intimately connected. Every young minister ought, at an early period of his professional life, to read some able treatise on the anatomy and physiology of the *vocal organs*.

Among these in order of importance, the *Lungs* hold the first place.

Speakers are too apt to forget, what a very small acquaintance with the human structure is sufficient to teach, that the *lungs* have other functions to discharge, essential to the animal economy, besides that of vocal sound. They are the instrument of respiration, by which a current of air passes into and out of the chest; and also the laboratory where the blood is refined and prepared for a healthy distribution to the extremities. The doctrine of many respectable chymists, assigning to the lungs the office of generating animal caloric, by admitting the oxygen, inhaled with the atmospheric air, to mingle with the blood, is questioned by others of so high authority, that it must be regarded as doubtful. As I would not anticipate the remarks which I have to make on the *care* of the vocal organs, it is enough to say here, that the most important of these organs, so delicate in its structure, so complex in its operations, and so

thoroughly protected from violence, by the casement of bones in which the Creator has enclosed it, ought not to be trifled with, by the ignorance or carelessness of its possessor.

Though a strong voice does not always result from vigor of lungs, it cannot exist without this. The bellows of an organ may be good, while its sound may be spoiled by the imperfection of its pipes. Other things being equal, he who has the most roomy chest, whose lungs admit the greatest quantity of air, and expel it with the greatest ease and force, has the strongest voice. Animals that have no lungs, as fish and certain insects, have no voice.

The *Trachea* is that cartilaginous tube, by which the air passes to and from the lungs. The length of this tube, and the firmness of its texture, have an important influence on the voice. A singer, in passing through the scale of musical notes, from the higher to the lower, shortens this tube by inclining the head forward; and ascending the scale, lengthens it by a contrary motion. To this tube chiefly, is owing the powerful voice of certain *birds*, their trachea or windpipe being very long in proportion to their size.

The *Larynx* is situated at the upper end of the foregoing tube; or rather is that part of the windpipe, which is next the mouth. It is a kind of cartilaginous box, very delicate and elastic, and so suspended by muscles as to be easily elevated or depressed. At the bottom of this box, is that projection or knot on the throat, which is very perceptible, especially in the neck of males, and which has been called *pomum Adami*, with some fanciful allusion to our first progenitor's having eaten the forbidden fruit. In the formation of musical notes, this box rises and falls nearly half an inch in the octave; and it is this larynx, with its curious organization, that is the seat of the voice. Its cartilages are the most firm and elastic in animals that utter the loudest cries or the deepest roarings, as the peacock, the elephant, and the lion. And the dissection of human subjects after death, shows that there is unusual firmness of

texture in the same organ, in the case of public criers, and others distinguished for power of voice while living.

The *Glottis* is a small aperture at the top of the larynx, through which the breath passes from the cavities below, directly into the mouth. It is so exquisite in structure, as to be dilated or contracted with perfect ease and exactness; while at the same time the tremulous chords of the larynx are strained or relaxed, as occasion requires, forming at once a resemblance to a wind and stringed instrument. The *orifice of the glottis* is adjusted with a nicety almost incredible to the purposes of vocal intonation; skilful anatomists having decided that a variation in the capacity of this orifice, not exceeding the fifty-fourth part of a silk-worm's thread, or one three hundred and fifty-fourth part of a hair, will occasion a difference of tone. Hence the irregularities of voice which take place in puberty, one part of this delicate apparatus being then more tense and another more relaxed; a state of things unfavorable to unity of tone. Hence too as the aperture of the glottis increases in size and firmness, by advance in age, the voice assumes a correspondent strength and gravity of intonation. And the fact that the capacity of this orifice is one third smaller, as well as that its cartilages are less firm, in women than in men, is the reason why the male voice is graver in tone than the female.

The *Epiglottis* is a perfect valve, so adjusted as to close up the aperture of the glottis. Its purpose is to secure this delicate organ both of respiration and sound from injury, especially when the food passes over it, in its way, by another avenue to the stomach.

By the above organs *voice* is produced, but not *speech*. The power of *articulation* depends on the modifications which sound undergoes by the action of a distinct set of organs. Before mentioning these, however, I have a few remarks to make on the action of the organs just described, especially the Glottis. Among the elementary sounds of which language is composed, there is a remarkable difference, as to the facility or difficulty with which they are uttered. This difference depends on the

organs employed in enunciation, the sounds formed chiefly by the glottis, being incomparably easier than those formed chiefly within the mouth. The reason is obvious; in uttering the open vowels, nothing is necessary but a stream of air flowing equably through the orifice of the glottis; whereas in uttering the consonants, the organs are thrown into positions very various, and sometimes very difficult. As an example of my meaning take the word *name*; and on the vowel (*a*) you may dwell, and draw it out so long as the supply of air in the lungs permits, while the position of the organs remains the same; but the instant you strike the (*m*), the current of breath through the mouth is stopped by the closing of the lips, and turned through the nostrils. So in speaking the word *note*, the sound of (*o*) is made by a single expiration through the glottis, and may be protracted at pleasure. But in passing on to utter (*t*) the tip of the tongue is suddenly thrust against the roof of the mouth, stopping both air and sound.

As a practical corollary from these facts; it would seem to follow, that *those languages must be most flowing and harmonic, which admit the greatest proportion of sounds made by the glottis*. Such is the real state of the case; and it is not a little curious that, on this point, the most barbarous, and the most polished languages agree. In the south of Europe, for example, as in Italy and Spain, *indolence* perhaps, rather than refinement of taste, has exchanged in the modern languages, all the harsher sounds, for those which are smooother and more liquid, and cost no labor of organs, except to open the mouth, and expel the air through the glottis. On the contrary, the common opinion that barbarous languages are peculiarly harsh and dissonant, is erroneous. Doctor John Mason Goode, a late medical writer of reputation, says; "Savages, in speaking, as in any other exertion, take no more pains than are absolutely necessary; and hence content themselves with the soft and simple vowel sounds, drawled out, indeed, at too great length; and when they are driven to the use of consonants, select those that give them least trouble to enunciate. On this account Lord Monboddo is

correct in observing, that 'the words of barbarous languages are long and full of vowels, not short and full of consonants, as has been imagined.' " He then quotes from Dr. Percival of Dublin the following remark: "The Otaheitans call Cooke, *Toote*. Their language is beautifully soft and vocal. A sentence reported in Cooke's second voyage, is distinguished by the harmonious collocation of its words: "Tootaha, taio Toote,—mutte Tootaha." "Tootaha, the friend of Cooke,—dead is Tootaha." Man in savage life is fond of ease, and would not move a muscle, if he could help it; in the voluptuousness of polished life he loves it equally; and is, if possible, still less disposed to exertion; and hence this extraordinary resemblance in the character of their articulations."

In accordance with these theories, is another set of facts respecting *stammering* persons, who cannot enunciate certain consonant sounds, especially in difficult combinations. This convulsive action of the vocal organs, the writer above mentioned, evidently regards as chiefly a mental affection, because he accounts for the ability of the stammerer to *sing*, by the strong interest with which the mind is engrossed, by the tune. In respect to reading—too he says; "One of the worst stutterers I have ever known, was one of the best readers of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. He was a scholar of considerable attainments, and had taken some pains with himself for his natural defect, without success; yet the moment an interesting *poem* was opened, his defect completely vanished, from his being led captive by the force of the subject, and the great interest he took in this branch of polite letters." Now I have no doubt that intense mental interest in what he utters, must greatly alleviate the hesitation of the stammerer; and that for a reason similar in its influence, the practice of Demosthenes to cure stammering, was founded on sound philosophy, when he declaimed on the sea shore, where his mind would be occupied with the majestic roar of the ocean, and his voice carried to its utmost pitch of energy. But there is a more simple explanation of these phenomena. The *singer* does not stammer because he utters only

vocal sounds, consisting in the stream of breath issuing through the aperture of the glottis. There is nothing to hinder him or to occasion hesitation, if he keeps his mouth open, and lets his voice flow. In reading poetry, the same principle holds; the harmonic structure being such as greatly to relieve the stammerer, by rythmical regularity of accent, and the open vowels recurring so constantly, that a large proportion of the sounds are those formed by the glottis alone.

If the foregoing premises are correct, the chief remedy for stuttering is simply and only this, to select, as a matter of calculation, and practice with steady perseverance, those sounds which *keep the glottis open*. By a similar process the public speaker, who would cultivate in his own voice, the power of uttering single words or sentences, with the greatest fullness, roundity, and strength, should accustom himself to read passages which call him to swell, and expand, and prolong the *vowel sounds*, that admit of the greatest loudness of tone. A few experiments may convince any man, that the voice, by proper management for such a purpose, is capable of almost indefinite improvement in strength.

I proceed now to mention very briefly, the *Organs of Articulation*.

The chief of these is the *tongue*. By its intimate connexion with the larynx, its muscular texture, its shape, and its activity, its aid is important in modifying vocal tones. In an instant it can be made long and short, tense or relaxed, concave or convex. It is applied with equal ease to the teeth, lips, or palate. According to its positions, the breath passes out, by a full or narrow stream, through the mouth, or is directed through the nostrils, or is entirely obstructed.

The importance of this organ in language, is obvious from one unquestionable fact, that in all common cases, the man who is without a tongue, whether by congenital defect, or by disease, is a dumb man. It is doubtless for this reason, that *tongue* and *language* are often used as synonymous words. It cannot indeed be questioned, that there have been cases in which the

power of articulation remained, when the tongue was destroyed or rendered useless; but these facts, and the stranger exploits of ventriloquism, however they may be explained, do not at all invalidate the general statement, that the tongue is the chief organ of speech.

Next in order is the *palate*, the concave arch of the mouth, according to the elevation of which is the depth of tone to the voice.

The *nostrils*, the *lips*, and the *teeth*, all have a distinct but important office to discharge, in the exercise of speaking. An obstruction of the nasal avenues, by a cold in the head, a polypus, or any organic defect, produces what is called the *nasal voice*, or in common phrase, *speaking through the nose*;—a very incorrect description, by the way, of a defect arising wholly from interruption of the usual passage of sound through the nostrils. This nasal voice is often occasioned or aggravated by the preposterous habit of taking *snuff*, in such quantities as to stimulate and obstruct the cavities of the nose.

Every one must have observed too, how a contusion on the lip, or the fissure called *hare-lip*, or the loss of even a single front tooth, produces a vitiated articulation.

I will add the suggestion here, that the best way for a man to become acquainted with his own vocal organs, is to observe them with care, especially when in action. Let him watch these organs, for example, in uttering the *vowels* and *mutes*. He will find that (*a*) in *all*, draws back the tongue, and makes it concave; while (*e*) in *mete*, makes it convex, and thrusts it forward. Let him try to protract the sound of a *mute*, and ascertain the difference in the action of his organs, that produces the sound of (*th*) in *think* and in *thou*. By a little perseverance in such an elementary examination, he will easily understand the operation of these delicate and wonderful organs, to an extent which he could never learn from mere description.

NOTE.

The author submitted the preceding and the two following Lectures to the perusal of a distinguished member of the medical profession, whose attention had been particularly turned to this subject, requesting his opinion on the following points:—

1. The *correctness* of the Anatomical and Physiological statements.
2. The expediency of such remarks from him to Theological Students.

The insertion of the reply may gratify the reader, and may also serve the twofold purpose, of confirming the correctness of the views presented in the Lecture, and of throwing some additional light on the subject. It is subjoined.—

“1. The Anatomical and Physiological statements seem to be technically correct, but it appears to me that the *Mucous Membrane* as an important part of the vocal organs, deserves a place in the description,—as being the seat of most of the diseases incident to the Larynx, Trachea, and Lungs.

“2. As to the expediency of such remarks to Theological Students, it would seem to depend entirely upon the solution of the question, whether they can fully understand them. This question would be easily decided, if the Directors of Theological Seminaries would provide the means of demonstrating these organs anatomically. This might be done at small expense in about two Lectures, and might be made not only useful, to the students, but particularly interesting to them.

J. W.”

LECTURE IX.

STRENGTH OF VOICE CONTINUED.—DIRECTIONS FOR STRENGTHENING THE VOICE.

HAVING passed in review that system of organs, on which both sound and speech depend, and the perfection of which is essential to strength of voice ; I proceed to show,

2. That strength of voice depends *on the proper exercise of these organs.*

This we might infer by analogy, from the general influence of exercise on the bodily functions. What is it that gives the day-laborer a larger hand or foot, and a firmer set of joints than the effeminate student?—Exercise. What gives to the sailor's wrist the hardness, and to his fingers the grasp of iron?—Exercise. In the same way we may account for the powerful voice of certain public criers and itinerant preachers ; whose organs of sound are strengthened by use, and yet are not affected by that train of debilitating causes, to which public speakers of the sedentary and studious class are exposed.

Still stronger evidence than that of analogy may be adduced, in this case, the evidence of *facts*, from which we may estimate the influence of exercise in strengthening the voice.

Of Garrick, (whose attainments in strength and variety of vocal powers, show what proper management of the voice will effect,) it is said, that the habit of speaking gave to his utterance an energy so wonderful, that sentences and parts of sentences even on his under key, were distinctly audible to ten thousand people: In this statement, there can be no mistake, as it is

made by Richard Cumberland, a perfect judge on such a subject, and an intimate associate of the great dramatic speaker.

The Abbe Maury, in describing the preaching of Bridaine, whom he ranks among the very first of French orators, says, "there were occasions on which his thundering voice gave a new energy to his eloquence, and the audience appeared in dismay before him. He was as easily heard by ten thousand people, in the open fields, as if he had spoken under the most resounding arch."

Whitefield is a still more remarkable example of this sort. The writer of his life informs us that twenty, thirty, and sometimes forty thousand persons assembled to hear him preach; and the profound silence which reigned through these promiscuous crowds, shows that they must have been generally reached by the preacher's voice. In one instance, it is stated, if I mistake not, that when he preached in the open air at Philadelphia, he was heard, with tolerable distinctness, by persons across the Delaware, three quarters of a mile distant.

In other cases, (and they are not a few that have fallen under my notice,) men who began to preach with a slender, tremulous utterance, have by *judicious practice*, acquired a manly and commanding power of voice. Still, it should be added, that not a few, by intemperate, or otherwise indiscreet management of the vocal organs, have been compelled altogether to relinquish public speaking.

Our THIRD inquiry is,—*how is the voice to be strengthened by exercise?*

In giving an intelligent answer to this question, it is to be remembered that *bodily effort*, of every sort, quickens respiration, increases the quantity of blood in the lungs, and accelerates its circulation. This is the case especially, when the lungs are the chief organ employed, as in speaking; and their capacity to bear the necessary effort, depends much on their being *accustomed* to such effort. The effeminate *gentleman* pants for breath, perhaps, in walking a few rods; while the *soldier* climbs a mountain, or crosses a continent without fatigue. But require

that soldier to read with a loud voice, for one hour, and he in turn pants, grows hoarse, and complains of intolerable fatigue. A new burden is thrown upon the animal system, because a new set of organs is called into exercise.

Before proceeding to give directions as to the method of strengthening the voice, I must add here a few remarks on the connexion of the respiratory with the other vital functions. The alternate expansion and contraction of the chest, in the process of breathing, is a matter of familiar experience. When the lungs are fully inflated, the diaphragm is, at the same instant, pressed downward, the abdomen is expanded, and the blood is assisted to flow freely onward in its course. By the action of the pulmonary vessels, "the heart becomes liberated from a load, which, if it were to remain in its cavity, would oppress it, and put a stop to its action. Hence we behold at once, the important connexion that exists between the sanguiferous and the respiratory systems, and how much the soundness of the one must depend on that of the other."*

While the action of the heart and arteries, however, is wholly involuntary, that of the pulmonary apparatus is, to some extent, under the control of the will. When the lungs are disturbed by violent exercise, as in running, the frequency of respiration is governed by a law of necessity; but when they are tranquil, it may be quicker or slower according to the choice of the individual. "Where the mind has, from an early period of life, been in the habit of exercising such a control, it is wonderful to contemplate the quantity of air, which the lungs may be brought to inclose, and the length of interval through which the life may be preserved without a fresh supply; of which savage nations furnish us with striking examples, in the art of diving and remaining under water. Diemerbröeck relates the case of a pearl diver, who, under his own eye, remained *half an hour* at a time under water, while pursuing his hunt for pearl muscles."†

In *loud* speaking, the air is forcibly expelled from the lungs, by a considerable effort, which if protracted amounts to fatigue;

* Goode I. 441.

† Goode I. 442.

whereas in *whispering*, there is almost no effort beyond the spontaneous action of breathing. In the latter case, the respiratory apparatus is tranquil; but by loud speaking, in which the voice is put to its full stretch, especially when the effort is continued for some time, respiration is disturbed, and the heart and arterial system are thrown into commotion. The influence of *habit* in loud speaking, therefore, on the power of these organs safely to sustain the labor of public elocution, must be of incalculable importance.

With these principles in view, I proceed to give some *practical directions* for strengthening the voice.

1. On common occasions, whenever you use your voice, *use as much voice as propriety will permit.*

The restriction, in this case, is easily applied by common sense. That vociferation at the fire side which seems to suppose all men deaf, is an unpardonable offence against good manners. There is a loudness and hardness of voice too, which in certain *devotional* exercises, is quite repulsive, as at meals, and in family prayer. With some such plain exceptions, cultivate a *habit* of full and strong enunciation. Extend it to social prayer, to exercises of the Lecture room, to conversation, in short, to all cases in which the voice is used. The quantity of voice in ordinary speech is chiefly important, as it affects your general *habit*. The fault against which I am guarding, often results from diffidence, or false notions of refinement. He who has been taught from childhood, always to suppress his voice, as one says, "When he becomes a man, minces out his words, like an Italian singer; and speaks on the most alarming subjects, with the delicate tone of a waiting gentlewoman."*

2. *Read aloud.*—The reason why this exercise strengthens the voice is obvious. As I have intimated above, in preparing

* On a voyage from New Orleans, in 1822, many of my fellow passengers were so favored with strength of lungs, and were so free to use it, as to make me wish with Addison, "that I could shut my ears as easily as my eyes." But it was amusing to notice among them a hale athletic man who whenever he addressed to any one a question or a remark, did it in a voice so indistinct and feeble, that he was in-

to utter a long sentence, even with a moderate stress, the lungs are inflated by a full inspiration of breath. The case is the same in uttering a short sentence, with a loud and strong note ; as when we speak but a word to a person at a distance. When this effort is continued at considerable length, the lungs, the diaphragm, and the whole chest, alternately expand and contract, with a vigorous action, resembling the sides of a bellows in full operation. According to a general law of the animal world the effort of these organs gives them strength. Hence the Stentorophonic note of the town crier, already noticed. Hence the little urchin, trained to the business of a chimney-sweep, acquires the power of uttering sounds, which are heard almost as far as a church bell. The feeble voice of the great Athenian orator, acquired force and dignity, as you know, by his practice of declaiming as he walked up hill ; and amid the dashing and noise of the sea-shore. And by a similar discipline of voice, the hardy youths of Rome attained a bold and commanding eloquence.

I am happy to corroborate my own views on this subject, by extracting a few sentences from an able prize dissertation, on *hemoptysis*, by John Ware, M. D.—“ The evil, (the failure of lungs in clergymen,) arises rather from the infrequency and inequality of the exercise of the lungs, than from its essential bad tendency. It should be a first object with one who engages in the clerical profession, especially if he has any of the marks of weak lungs, if he is constitutionally liable to pulmonary complaints, if he is subject to disorder of the digestive organs, or has a tendency to it, to accustom himself gradually to that kind of exertion, which will be required by the duties of his future profession. This is to be attempted by the *constant, daily practice of loud speaking or reading*. This need waste no

variably desired to repeat his words. This was a bad habit in a *merchant*. But when a *preacher* makes a social prayer, gives thanks at table, or answers a question, in a voice scarcely audible at the distance of one yard, the habit becomes a serious injury to his great business for life.

time, and may be made to answer other good purposes. If this kind of exercise be persevered in, it seems almost certain that all, except those whose lungs are radically infirm, may acquire the habit of going through their professional performances, without injury ; and as for those who fail, it is better for them to know at once their incapacity, than to spend the best years of their youth, in qualifying themselves for a profession, which they must finally relinquish."

It is proper to add, that aside from its connexion with eloquence, the exercise of lungs, which I am urging, is important, as a preservative of the student's health. In this view it is recommended by the philosophical poet Dr. Armstrong.

"Read aloud, resounding Homer's strain,
And wield the thunder of Demosthenes.
The chest, so exercised improves in strength ;
And quick vibrations through the bowels drive
The restless blood."

To secure the proposed advantages of this exercise, however, it must not be attended to irregularly and rarely ; it must proceed on a *settled plan*. At least ten minutes daily, and occasionally half an hour should be devoted to it.

Much will depend too on proper *selections* for the exercise. As a lounging walk fatigues, while a brisk step exhilarates the animal system ; so, to read aloud a passage from some tame didactic composition, is intolerably irksome ; while the voice is spontaneously swelled to its full impulse, in reading a spirited speech, or a vivid description, from prose or poetry. The same principle, I will say in passing, should never be forgotten, in *original* preparations for rhetorical exercises.

3. *Let your position be erect*, when you read ;—I mean, let it be *standing*, not *sitting*. In a sitting posture, the upward pressure of the stomach and bowels prevents the due expansion of the lungs. An inclination of the head forward, bends and shortens the trachea, and obstructs the free passage of the breath. But when you stand erect, the cavity of the chest is enlarged, respiration is free, and all the vocal organs may perform their office without constraint. But on this head it is needless to enlarge.

LECTURE X.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE VOCAL ORGANS.

The foregoing inquiries, why strength of voice is important to a preacher, on what it depends, and how it is promoted by exercise; lead to some *practical reflections* on which I propose to enlarge.

These reflections all have respect to one chief point, the *preservation of the vocal organs*. In more than one instance, Gentlemen, I have heard young ministers, who had been my pupils, whispering with broken lungs, their surprise, that the point I am now urging should not have been *seasonably* thought of by themselves. My reply to them has been as it will be to any of you, should I hear you utter the same regret, some five years hence; "It is not the fault of your Instructors, that these things have not been thought of." While this subject is in hand then, I affectionately offer you some admonitory remarks, in the hope that they may save some of you from those painful lessons, which so many have refused to learn from any teacher but experience.

It is a subject, I am well aware, which belongs rather to the Medical Professor, than to me. But if the learned physician well understands the danger of the public speaker, which is not always the case, his counsel, in most instances, does not bear on the mischief in *season*. It is not *sought* except to administer the "pound of remedy," where the "ounce of prevention" was neglected. Nor am I such a novice in human affairs, as to expect that any counsels which I can give, by way of premonition, will be *seasonably* and *seriously* regarded by more than

one in ten of those to whom they are addressed. One who had the very best opportunities for observation on this subject, and who was much distinguished too for discrimination of judgment,* remarked to me, "The student must break down *himself*, before he will take warning; very few men will learn any thing, as to the preservation of health, from the experience of others." Strange as it may seem, the great majority of students think precautions of this sort very proper for *others*, but altogether needless for *themselves*. So it has been, and so it probably will continue to be. Yet even in this unpromising aspect of the case, I will proceed; for should these admonitions be instrumental of saving a single young minister from the premature sacrifice of himself, the labor of giving them will be a thousand-fold rewarded.

FIRST, to preserve the vocal organs, especially the lungs, the general tone of health must be sustained.

These organs being intimately connected with a complex, animal machinery, whatever serious injury befalls other parts of this machinery, will probably affect these more or less directly. Peculiarly may this be expected in students and public speakers, who are predisposed by their employments to diseases of the chest. The frequent occurrence of blood-spitting, and pulmonary consumption among preachers, is the subject of proverbial remark. An effect so unquestionable, and so lamentable, must have an adequate cause.

This doubtless consists partly in the peculiar labors of their office, as I have repeatedly intimated. The indiscreet action to which the vocal organs are often called in loud and long continued delivery, and under various adverse circumstances, exposes them to much hazard, and certainly, in many instances, is sufficient to account for their absolute failure. In cases of this sort, however, I am inclined to believe from much observation, that primarily the trachea, or other apparatus above the lungs, are the seat of injury, more commonly than the lungs themselves; and that if the first threatenings of disease in these

* President Dwight.

organs were duly regarded, its fatal progress in destroying the lungs, might, with comparative ease, be arrested.

But the efforts of preachers in the act of public speaking, is after all but a secondary cause; the mischief has a deeper origin; it lies substantially in their *habits, as men of study*.

The spirit of the age, especially in our own country, calls for high intellectual effort from the preacher. Go where he may almost, among our towns and villages, let him collect a congregation, and there are men among them, men who give a cast to public sentiment around them, who will not be put off with tame, common place sermons. They demand instruction; at least they will not be satisfied without evidence that the man who addresses them as a Christian teacher, has bestowed some mature reflection on what he delivers. Whatever apology they may make for defects in his native powers, they insist upon it, that he shall be more than a middling man in his intellectual attainments; and still more they demand that he shall be *earnest*, from a deep feeling of what he delivers. We ought to rejoice, that this taste is every day increasing, and that it is already so prevalent, as to extend to the rudest settlements of the west.

It is besides a day in which Christian enterprise is multiplying its efforts to evangelize the heathen, to plant churches in our own destitute regions, and to spread Bibles and Sabbath Schools, over the face of the whole land. In these efforts, ministers are properly expected to take, and generally do of choice take a very leading part; and in the above circumstances combined, we perceive the true reason why they are more apt to break down, as to health, than other professional men. The preacher enters on his sacred work, exhausted in health, by ten years of classical and professional study. The world around him is full of effort. Stir and activity characterize every department of business. Sanguine perhaps in the elasticity of youthful fervor, and urged onward by the cogent motives of his religion, he assigns himself a task to which no human powers are equal. Superadded to various and important pastoral duties, to all of which he is unaccustomed, is the original composition of ser-

mons, a labor which has no parallel in any other literary profession. This accumulation of official business presses him to extremity of mental effort. His digestive organs fail. He has no *time* at first, and soon no *courage* nor *strength*, to repair his wasting energies by exercise ; till hemorrhage of lungs finishes the work of prostration.

Among the cases of fatal pulmonary disease, occurring of late so often, in our profession, a great proportion are superinduced in a train like that just described. The student is debilitated by sedentary habits ; the stomach becomes diseased ; digestion fails ; arterial action is imperfect ; the muscles lose their fulness and tone ; the face is pale, and the extremities cold, through defect not in the *quantity*, but in the proper *distribution* of the blood. That portion of this vital fluid which should go to the surface, is left by a sluggish circulation to oppress the lungs. Their fine vessels, thus distended and irritable, are ready to be ruptured by the influence of uncommon cold, or heat, or muscular action. The whole case is summed up in one sentence. The structure of the lungs is of course endangered by the operation of causes, which at once *increase their excitement, and diminish their strength*.

Do you ask how this train of calamities is to be avoided ? The answer is, by a single prescription, the first, second, and third ingredient of which are,—*exercise*. Do you ask *what* exercise ?—That depends on circumstances. Let some judicious physician, or other friend on whom you can rely, aid by his counsels, the suggestions of your own experience. With such assistance ; and with the reserved privilege of often changing your choice, should the case require it, select that kind of exercise which is best suited to your own present condition. In general I will say, that exercise should be adapted to brace the muscular system, especially the muscles of the chest and the gastric region ; that it should be, as far as practicable, in the open air ; and should be adapted to exhilarate the spirits. The requisites, in my opinion, can in no way be combined, by any factitious system, like that of gymnastics, so well as by a judicious

plan of *manual labor*, agricultural or mechanical. Instead of this or in addition to it, *walking* is an exercise, that in some respects has advantages over any other ; and in certain states of the body, as in pulmonic affections, the *saddle* is unquestionably the best resort of the invalid.

Whatever course is adopted, several things should be remembered ;—that more may be done, in one day, to confirm a sound constitution, than in one month to retrieve a broken one ; that exercise, to be efficacious, must be regulated not by fits and impulses, but by a vigorous *system* resolutely executed ; that its daily amount should be adjusted, not by an indolent temper, but by religious principle, according to the physical condition of the individual ; and that this should be, in all cases, not less than *one hour*, before each meal, equivalent to *labor* ; when the muscular power admits it, and when not, a longer time still, will be requisite for *passive* exercise.

Without entering into more particulars, however, I repeat the statement, with confidence, that exercise in some systematic form, is to be relied on more than all other things, to shield the student's lungs, by sustaining the vigor of his constitution.*

* Perhaps my own case may be regarded as proving, that neither correct theory nor correct practice, as to exercise, can be expected to prevent infirmity of lungs. Certainly there are cases of such infirmity, not to be controlled by ordinary means, and therefore not falling within ordinary rules. But the truth is, that my own *experience* is not less admonitory to young men, than my *precepts* ; as a brief sketch of this experience will show. I entered College at the age of fifteen. Those active habits, which had previously sustained my health, were gradually diminished during two and a half years of severe study, often continued to a late hour at night. Without one admonition or apprehension of my danger, my strength imperceptibly declined, till a single cold threatened to destroy my lungs. Six months' travelling enabled me to resume my studies. Thus admonished, I proceeded with more regularity and caution, till my health was confirmed by the saddle exercise, which I was called to take, as a candidate for the ministry. As a pastor, I soon became so involved in labors, that I gradually forgot the past, and presuming too much on the stock of strength I had acquired, devoted to my study every hour, that I dared to retrench from my exercise and parochial duties. Upon emergencies I often sat at my table from *twelve to fifteen* hours in a day ; and not unfrequently read or wrote an hour or two after midnight.

I can hardly dismiss this topic without saying, that a judicious regard to *diet* is indispensable in guarding from disease the vital organs of studious men. As I am not writing a medical treatise, it would be absurd for me to go into minute directions on this point. I refer you rather to a little work of Dr. Johnson, on Morbid Irritability of Stomach and Bowels, which combines, with medical science, more common sense, than any thing I have seen on this difficult subject. I will add the expression of my own decided belief, that while the amount of *exercise* taken by students is generally too *little* by one half, the quantity of their food is too *great*, in about the same proportion. "Sat verbum sapienti."

SECONDLY. *To spare the vocal organs from all IMPROPER EFFORTS, is essential to their preservation.*

The most common mistake of this kind which I have noticed, is that of speaking on too *high a key*. By key, I mean that note of the voice which most frequently occurs; or that which comes to your ear, when you hear one speak in another room, without distinguishing the words uttered. The right key for any speaker, is that which his own voice spontaneously adopts in animated conversation. To speak on a note much above this, fatigues the lungs, as every one knows, who has made the trial. The tendency to this mistake is not only unquestionable,

Eight years after my ordination, during the accumulated labors and excitements, incident to a revival, in my congregation, my health failed, so that I was unable to preach for forty-six sabbaths. By resorting again to the saddle, to mechanical labor at the work bench, to wood-sawing, to gardening, and at last to holding the plough (*instar omnium*, in my case,) sufficient strength was gained to go on with my ministry; but it was only the strength of an invalid. Now it was my *calamity* to have inherited a constitution predisposed to catarrh and dyspepsy; but it was my *fault*, (and a grievous one,) that I invited disease, by indulging love of study, without a more settled *plan of daily exercise*. I bless God, that for the last twenty years, a thorough reformation has enabled me, not indeed to retrieve former mistakes, but to *live*; and by his gracious smiles on my imperfect labors, to live, as I hope, not wholly in vain.

as a matter of fact, but is easily explained.* When we call to one at a distance, and perceive that he did not hear us, we repeat the call in a higher note, and with more stress. When the voice has reached its full force on a given note, and is still insufficient, it spontaneously adopts a *higher note*, as the only remedy to which it can resort, and this indeed a useless one, if carried beyond a moderate extent. On this principle, a preacher who apprehends that he shall not be heard, instinctively *elevates* his voice, and often does this at the expense of exchanging a flowing and diversified modulation, for an inveterate monotony. It is a serious infelicity that the fault from which weak lungs are most liable to be injured, is the one into which they are most likely to fall.†

Let every speaker then, ascertain his *own natural key*. If he has not skill enough in musical sounds to do this, let him ask the aid of some friend. It is of small importance, (provided it

* A high note fatigues ;—especially if that note is unnatural ; not because expense of *breath* is increased, for it is otherwise when the passage of the glottis is most contracted ; but because the effort to expel the breath is greater in a high note than a low one ; as the labor of a bellows is increased, if the pipe is obstructed.

† I knew a young minister, whose voice, naturally strong and clear, was impaired by the state of health with which he commenced preaching. Apprehension that he should not be well heard, led him to attempt a remedy for what was wanting in *quantity of sound*, by an *elevation of pitch*, totally inconsistent with variety, force, and ease in delivery. Speaking was labor ; especially on some public occasions, where the assembly was larger, and less orderly than usual ; in which cases, the sensation of fatigue was extreme. His friends were anxious, lest he should fall a premature sacrifice to his profession. When he was compelled at length to investigate the difficulty, the error was apparent.

The *low* key of his voice, in conversation, and in music, had always been exchanged for a *tenor* key in the pulpit. He resolved to reform ; analyzed his voice by a pitch pipe ;—read daily a few sentences, on different notes in the scale, aiming particularly to fill his voice on the *lowest* note, on which he could articulate distinctly. In a few months, he acquired a compass and management of voice, which was an important relief to himself and hearers.

[The reader should be informed, that though delicacy led the author to use the third person in the foregoing narrative, he describes his own case. M.]

be not extreme,) whether this key is high or low. The latter has some advantages in point of dignity ; but the former is more audible. Among the first secular orators of Britain, Pitt's voice was a full tenor, and Fox's a treble. A considerable change in a man's key, is often practicable, and sometimes expedient ;—but a violent departure from it, to a higher note, for a given occasion, is always dangerous.

Another case in which the vocal organs are often put to a hazardous effort, is the attempt of the preacher to accommodate his delivery to those in a congregation, whose *hearing is very defective*. His danger in this case, arises not so much from the surly complaints of those who most unreasonably blame the speaker, when they should bow to an act of God ; as from the listening attitude, the earnest, imploring look, that denotes a heart "hungry for the bread of life." In some instances of the latter description, the loss of hearing makes a tender appeal to our sympathy. But in regard to this whole subject, the preacher's duty, so far as it can be prescribed, lies in narrow limits. All persons of this sort, who can be made to hear a sermon, by an advantageous position, by artificial helps, or by such increase of the speaker's voice, as shall not be hazardous to himself, nor inconvenient to others, are entitled to the kindest regard. All whose hearing is still more defective, instead of demanding a remedy for their own physical disability, in a preposterous loudness of the preacher's voice, should cheerfully submit to a privation so calamitous, as they should submit to any other affliction from the hand of God. Especially if the church is spacious, and adjacent to noisy streets, as is often the fact in cities, any effort of voice beyond the above limits, may be fatal to the preacher's life.

As I have here glanced at the *location* of churches upon *noisy streets*, I will just add the expression of my wonder at the little consideration, especially in cities, which has been given to this circumstance. It were easy to imagine, without any experience, that the trampling of horses, and the rumbling of iron bound wheels, on a naked pavement, under the very windows

of a church, in time of public worship, must be a great annoyance to a religious assembly. To say nothing of the objects passing without, to attract the *eyes* of inconsiderate hearers, the incessant *noise* must inevitably disturb the whole congregation, and, occasionally at least, drown the voice of the preacher. Yet some of the most elegant and expensive churches of the land, have been erected with almost no regard to the main object of every such edifice, namely the undisturbed worship of God, by an assembly convened to hear his gospel dispensed. The stunning noise of the streets, compels the speaker to put forth all the powers of his voice ; while unavoidably one half of his sermon is lost to the majority of his hearers. If the number of ministers could be reckoned up, whose lives have been made a sacrifice to the injudicious locations and structure of churches, it would be an appalling catalogue. The whimsicalness, or the parsimony of a congregation, or their more excusable reluctance to correct any such mistake made by their fathers, often perpetuates the mischief. In such a case, the candidate for the ministry should take the remedy into his own hands, and refuse to occupy a pulpit, that has proved the grave of his predecessors.

Another abuse of the vocal organs, to be avoided as far as possible, is *that of speaking in apartments so crowded as to destroy the vitality of the air.*

From modern experiments, conducted by the ablest professors, what was matter of individual experience or opinion, on this subject, is now generally admitted as unquestionable truth. The writer whom I have before quoted, states that, "Persons in good health, in perfect quiet, with an open chest, breath about twenty times in a minute. Taking twenty cubic inches as the ordinary quantity of external air inhaled and exhaled, about twenty times in a minute, it will follow that a full-grown person respires *twenty four thousand cubic inches in an hour.*" Now the practical bearing of this statement on the case in hand, is the fact, that of the atmospheric air inhaled, all or nearly all the nitrogen is returned, while about one third of the oxygen is retained in the system, and at the same time, a considerable

surplus of carbonic acid, generated in the system, is thrown out in each breath. The consequence is, that by being inhaled once, the air is so changed as to be unfit for respiration. Of course, in a close apartment, crowded with people, the whole body of air, breathed over and over, loses its essential properties for the sustenance of animal life. To speak, for any length of time, in such circumstances, is to lay a burden on the lungs which they cannot bear. Any man, however robust, feels a suffocating oppression on his chest, the moment he steps into such a place from the open air.

I said that speaking in such circumstances, should be avoided, as *far as possible*. There are doubtless occasions in pastoral life, such as often occur in revivals of religion, which prescribe their own rules; and in which a faithful minister will deliberately choose to encounter the inconvenience and risk to which I have alluded.

The last mistake against which I would caution young ministers, under this head, is *that of putting the vocal organs to any considerable effort, while these organs are affected by any serious injury or disease*. The particulars which fall under this division I might greatly amplify, but I shall choose to be brief. Nothing is farther from my intention than to invade the province of the medical profession, so far as to make a book of prescriptions for sick men. Yet precautionary suggestions to his younger brethren, from one who has been taught in the school of severe experience, can never be out of season. Nor would I willingly do any thing towards raising up for the service of the church, a race of puny invalids, who must shrink from every blast of wind, and prosecute their professional labors, pressed down under a load of imaginary infirmities. One week of positive existence, in the full exercise of all a man's powers, is worth a year of that irresolution and imbecility, which attend all his efforts, in a state of prostrated health and spirits. To become over delicate, and over scrupulous as to exposure, is a great extreme, especially in a young man. But there are states of the animal system, in which exposure and effort of the vital

organs is rashness. It is to cases of this sort, that the following suggestions are meant to apply ; while I would be distinctly understood to urge, that *when any of the organs of voice are seriously diseased, recourse should be had at once, to the best medical advice, that can be obtained.*

Sometimes one or more of the vocal organs is in a *state of inflammation*, which for the time renders public speaking unsafe, if not impracticable. This, as every one knows, may result from a common cold, affecting the glottis, or the lining of the larynx or trachea, and producing such a temporary change in these organs, that they can perform their office very imperfectly, or not at all. Dr. Goode describes the case of an English Attorney, who having caught cold, was seized with a hoarseness, that in six days rendered him totally speechless ; in which state he continued, scarcely able to make the least articulate sound, for four years. At last, in a frightful dream, struggling with all his might to call for help, he actually did articulate aloud, and recovered his usual voice from that moment.

The same author, speaking of a suppression of voice, from neglected hoarseness, says, "A catarrhal whisper is a frequent occurrence, and there can be few practitioners who have not met with examples of it. The voice is often injured from the commencement of the catarrh, as well in consequence of the inflammatory affection of the membrane that lines the glottis, as of the increased secretion of mucus that issues from the interior of a great part of the trachea. This is a result of that weakness, which inflammatory action induces in the vocal organs, as a sequel, rather than a symptom of the inflammatory action itself."*

* The above remarks on the vocal organs, were written at St. Augustine. Immediately afterwards, three cases of *whispering voice* came under my notice, which I will briefly describe. The first was that of a lady, who was residing in Augustine, on account of slender health, in the spring of 1830. Though able to take exercise abroad daily, her voice was reduced to a whisper, by a local affection of the throat, of which I learned no particulars, except that it came on with a neglected hoarseness.

The second case was that of a gentleman, a lawyer, who was a fellow passenger in the packet, in which I returned from Augustine to

The tendency of using these organs, when their delicate membranes are inflamed, is instantly to increase the inflammation. This will often be apparent from merely conversing with a friend, for a few minutes, and that in a moderate voice; of course the effort of *public* speaking in the same state of these organs, must be presumption. One of the most severe attacks of illness I ever experienced, was produced by delivering a single sermon, while laboring under a stubborn hoarseness. A

Charleston. After observing for some time that he conversed only in a whisper, I enquired into the reasons, and had from him the following statement. "At a political meeting, in Johnstown, New York, I delivered an address, in a crowded, heated room, myself being exposed to the action of a large fire. I afterwards rode some miles, in a cold evening, and became very hoarse. Before the hoarseness had subsided, I was called to argue an interesting and protracted cause in court. This effort produced an inflammation of the chest, and this was followed with the loss of my voice, so that for many months I have spoken only in a whisper." Of this gentleman, I have no knowledge since that time.

The third case is that of Rev. Mr. ——— a minister of Connecticut, whom I met at Charleston the same month, and who could articulate only in a whisper. After my return home, I addressed a letter to him requesting a particular statement as to the loss of his voice. The following is his answer.

"In the month of October 1828, I took a severe cold, which fastened upon my lungs, and produced a violent cough, and hoarseness. While in that state, I continued to preach, though I spake with much difficulty for several sabbaths. After that, I spake with more ease, but my cough continued without any abatement through the fall and winter. Profuse night-sweats commenced about the first of January 1829, which, with my cough, continued to increase till about the first of March, at which time I sunk under their accumulated pressure. After that period, I was under the care of physicians, for several months; and as warm weather advanced, my health gradually improved, till September, though still poor. Not being able to discharge the duties I owed to my people, I requested a dismissal, which was granted. Being requested to enter upon a *Bible agency*, for Hartford county, I ventured to undertake it, but was obliged to relinquish it, (after having visited twelve parishes) in consequence of a constantly increasing hoarseness of voice, which terminated in a whisper about the first of March 1830. This was attended with a great degree of weakness at my lungs, and a general prostration of strength; also with a distressing soreness in my throat. In this condition, I placed myself under the care of a skilful physician in the city of Hartford, until I started for the South, which was on the 5th of last April.—You saw

partial and harmless affection of this sort, which would pass off in a few days, if properly treated, may be transformed by a little indiscretion, into a fixed and protracted disease of the vital parts. Many valuable ministers of my acquaintance, have been disabled for months, and others permanently cut off from usefulness or life, by one such mistake as I am considering.

I am aware that a good minister often has strong inducements to forget himself, and to trespass on the most obvious principles, in the neglect of his health. But why should he sacrifice years of useful labor, to the ill-judged effort of an hour? Every minister is the guardian of his own life; and the only proper judge as to his own physical capabilities. Suppose that his health is good, except that he is the subject of a severe *hoarseness*. He is urged to preach for some father in the ministry, whom he respects, and to whom perhaps, he may be under many personal obligations. He is told that his hoarseness will subside; that speaking is good for it;—he is importuned to make the trial this once, by an array of motives that strongly appeal to his feelings. What shall he do?—Let him *refuse* to preach; and if still urged, let him again promptly and unequivocally *refuse*. I give the same answer, where a man is strongly urged by *circumstances*, to preach, even in his own pulpit, when he is physically unable. There is one general principle, which I would fix irreversibly, to shield a young man from the unreasonable, I had almost said, shameless importunities, which he is liable to meet with from older ministers. Let him hold himself *ready* to preach, whenever regularly called to it, and that without being urged. But if, in his *own judgment*, which in this case he must follow, he cannot preach without serious danger to his health, let him yield to no importunity.

me the day I arrived in *Charleston*, and recollect the state I was in at that time; and at the time I left that place on my return to the North. About the first of July I began to speak loud, in a low, hoarse tone of voice. Since that, my voice has been very gradually improving, and I am now able to lead in family devotion.—My prayers, however, are uttered with a low tone of voice, and are very concise. What effect the cold weather will have upon me, I am unable to predict. I shall tremble at its approach."

But the vocal organs are subject to other injuries besides catarrhal inflammation of their membranes. It has been known from the infancy of anatomy, that by certain injuries to the nerves of the trachea, the noisiest animals are immediately struck dumb. Galen produces the case of two boys, in whom the loss of voice was occasioned by the blunder of surgeons, who cut these nerves in extracting tumors from the neck.

"The voice has frequently been injured by straining the ligaments, and the minute muscles which move the parts of the glottis on each other; in elevating the voice to a high pitch in public addresses, or in striving at a note in singing, which the voice will not reach. So Pliny tells us that Gracchus, during a violent exertion in speaking, had his voice suddenly sink to a feminine treble.—A sudden and overwhelming emotion of the mind, will sometimes totally stifle the voice, or sink it to an almost inaudible whisper. Rest and tranquillity will usually restore it in a short time; but in some instances the effect has been permanent.—We sometimes meet with a debility in the organs of the voice, which reduces it to a whisper, without being able to ascribe it to any particular cause. This is often temporary, but in some instances, it has been more or less permanent, or intermissive."*

All that remains to be said on the foregoing topics is, that whenever the preacher finds his vocal organs affected with any serious injury or disability, he should *stop speaking*, I mean *public* speaking; and even in conversation, he should use his voice cautiously, till the difficulty subsides.

THIRDLY, to preserve the vocal organs, certain *habits, which are often found connected with public speaking, should be avoided.*

Most of these need only be mentioned, with but little enlargement.

1. *Bad attitudes of writing.* I have already said that the failure of the preacher's lungs, is more frequently owing to his

* Dr. Goode.

habits as a *student*, than to his efforts in *public speaking*. This latter exercise, indeed, when conducted with tolerable judgment, doubtless invigorates the constitution. The danger to which I now refer, is such a posture of study as will obstruct the vital functions, by producing a contraction of the chest. More than any other professional men, preachers, who write out their sermons, are exposed to this danger. And the developement of the mischief is the more certain, and the more serious in after life, when the *youthful* habits of the study table have been such as to diminish the cavity of the chest, and oppress the vital organs. This is the tendency of any posture or external pressure, while the bones of the chest are in a flexible and forming state, by which the ribs or sternum lose their proper form, and become incurvated, without the power of sufficient expansion. The celebrated Dr. Tissot says that, the attitude of a man *sitting* at study, interrupts the circulation in the lower extremities, which in process of time, must necessarily suffer from this circumstance; the bending of the body constrains the abdominal viscera, disturbs their functions, and disorders the digestive powers. The *standing desk* is the remedy most commonly recommended in this case, and is doubtless a good one, to those who have animal vigor to sustain the exhaustion it occasions. To myself the only remedy has been in taking care to sit upright, and to avoid a contact of the chest with any hard substance.

2. *Late preparation for the pulpit*, is another of those habits, by which the lungs are exposed to serious hazard. When the labor of conducting two or three religious services on a Sabbath, succeeds an interval of rest and relaxation, the preacher of tolerable vital strength sustains it without inconvenience. But when the fatigue of long continued public speaking is immediately superadded to such exhaustion of vital power, as results from intense and protracted study, the effort is always dangerous, and often fatal to the lungs. Other things being equal, the preacher who gives himself one entire day of remission, between the labors of the study and the pulpit, is much wiser than he

who is accustomed to push his preparation of sermons late into Saturday night, or even into the Sabbath, till the very hour of public service. And here I will say once for all, as to late studies at night, especially on Saturday night, that whatever a man may accomplish by this means, is no gain, if he loses his eyes, his health, and his senses, in the process.

3. *Full meals before preaching.* These, by distending the stomach and intestines, hinder the expansion of the lungs; and therefore Wright, in his *Philosophy of Elocution*, advises, that previous to the exertion of public speaking, such articles of food should be selected, as contain the greatest portion of nutriment in the smallest bulk. On the contrary, others object to the stimulating quality of such aliments, and prefer those denominated light. Without going into detail, experience seems to enjoin two precautions; that the preacher's meal before speaking, be such in *quantity* as not greatly to distend the stomach; and that both in *quantity* and *kind*, it be such as not to produce a hurried circulation of the blood, and of course, in connexion with public speaking, a hazardous determination to the lungs.

4. *Use of stimulating liquors*, immediately before or after speaking. The prohibition of such drinks to men of the sacred profession, in the Jewish church, rested on broader grounds than the one I am considering; and so does the spirit of that prohibition to men of the same profession, in all ages. That a minister of the gospel should impair his health and reason by "strong drink," is a deviation from all Christian propriety, so manifest and monstrous, as to deserve the reprobation of all respectable men. The use of stimulants, however, immediately after speaking, has been very general, even among the most temperate ministers, till the custom was so nearly abolished, by the late revolution of public sentiment, respecting the use of spirits and wine. Nothing indeed would be more preposterous, as to the safety of the lungs, when already excited to the full pitch of endurance, by loud and continued speaking, than to superadd the feverish stimulus of intoxicating drinks.

Finally; while the lungs are still heated with the effort of

speaking, exposure to currents of cold air should be avoided. The bare mention of this precaution is all that the case requires.

In concluding these admonitory suggestions, Gentlemen, I must rely upon your good sense, to make the distinction between those which are applicable to invalids only, and those which apply also to men in health. There is such a thing as making every attention to the structure and preservation of our own vital organs, minister only to a morbid timidity and delicacy of temperament, that is fatal to Christian efficiency, and manliness of character. The church, at this day, calls for ministers and missionaries, not rendered effeminate by habits of self-indulgence; not disabled for duty by every trifling inconvenience as to food or accommodations. On the contrary, there is a heedless and useless exposure of the vocal organs, which the young preacher may learn to avoid, without any diminution of his energies; and which he is bound to avoid by a reasonable regard to his own usefulness. It is a calamity to the church, that her *best* ministers are most likely to sink under premature infirmity, by an ill-judged expenditure of vital power, in the discharge of their duties. To render some aid in calling a proper attention to this subject, on which almost nothing hitherto has been written, I have ventured to express my own thoughts with a particularity of remark, which others may think unnecessarily extended.

NOTE.

After these Lectures on the Vocal Organs were written, I observed a literary notice of a work by an English physician, published in 1829, in which the writer professes to exhibit a "definite plan for removing that peculiar affection of the throat to which Clergymen and other public speakers are liable." Having procured the work from London, and read with attention the part of it relating to this subject, I subjoin here a brief view of its chief remarks. The author speaks of this affection as one that has, of late years, greatly distressed many of the English Clergy and dissenting ministers. "The cause of this malady," he says, "is evidently a local debility, induced by too great use of the windpipe in speaking." His indications of treatment are twofold,—to restore the general health, when impaired;—and to soothe and invigorate the diseased parts.

His general remedies I shall not notice, being much the same which I suppose any intelligent physician would prescribe.

His remedies for the local malady are,

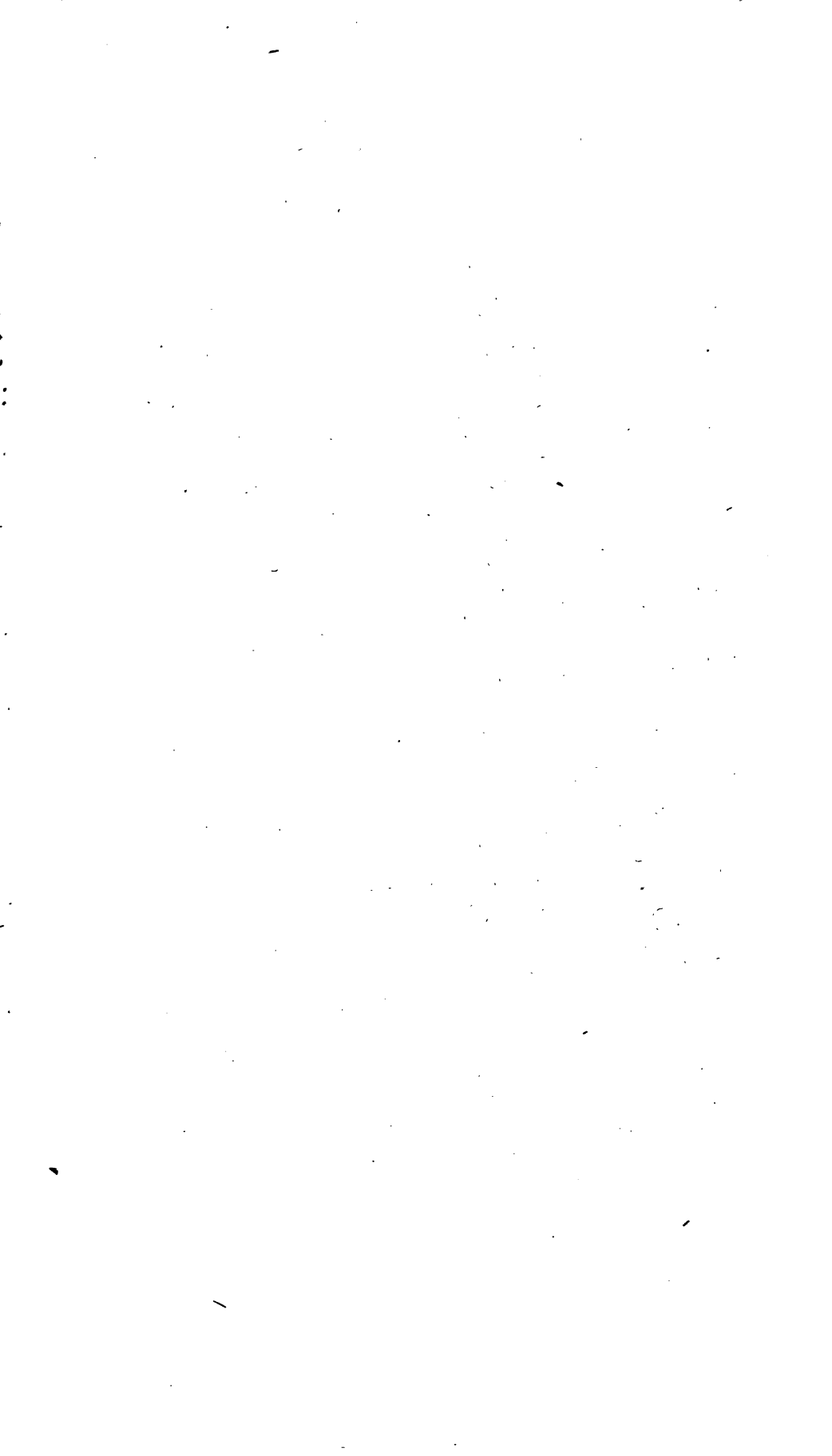
1. Rest. The cause of the irritation, namely, public speaking, must be discontinued, or there is no reasonable hope of relief.

2. Friction; and that continued, at least twice daily, for ten or fifteen minutes; the brush or hand being dipped in cold water.

3. Avoid blood-letting, except in cases of *active* inflammation. Even leeches and cupping, applied to the throat, in this complaint, are improper where there is only a chronic kind of inflammatory action.

4. Occasional blisters on the throat or back of the neck, may be useful.

The author differs probably from most physicians in the third direction; but my own experience accords with his opinion. In the others he is doubtless right. Rest, friction, cold ablution, gargling with cold water, will probably in most cases be sufficient, when the complaint is slight. If it is at all serious, the external application of *mustard* has been more efficacious with me, than all other remedies.



LECTURES ON STYLE.

LECTURE I.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.—REASONS WHY A THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF HIS OWN LANGUAGE IS INDISPENSABLE TO A PREACHER.

Harris, in his *Hermes*, judiciously remarks, “Nothing is more absurd than the common notion that instruction is to be poured into the mind, like water into a cistern, which passively waits to receive all that comes. The growth of knowledge is like the growth of fruit; however external causes may, in some degree cooperate; the internal vigor of the tree must ripen the juices to their just maturity.”

Perhaps this remark is not so applicable to any other system of instruction, as to that which is conducted by lectures. The design of these is not so much to bring the student a fund of knowledge, already prepared for use, as to point him to such subjects and sources of investigation, as may *excite* and *direct* the efforts of his own understanding.

Invention would claim the first place in the plan of these Lectures, as sketched in the statutes of the Seminary; but I shall omit the consideration of this for the present. In passing, however, it may be proper to remark that sterility of genius, wherever it exists, is not to be cured by rhetoric. This is a case where the elaborate prescriptions, even of Cicero and Quintilian, are of little avail. Dr. Witherspoon observes, “Most men find much more difficulty in selecting what is proper, than in inventing something that seems to be tolerable. There are

some, I confess, whom their own stupidity or that of their relations, forces to attempt public speaking, who are not able to bring out any thing, either good or bad." He adds, "I have known some examples of *ministers*, whose principal defect was mere barrenness of invention. This is exceedingly rare ; because far the greatest number of bad speakers have enough to say, such as it is, and generally, the more absurd and incoherent, the greater the abundance."

Now it is a perfectly plain case, that a man's mental resources will be slender, just in proportion as he neglects to acquire habits of thinking, and to cultivate his powers of invention. For this reason, the preacher, if he is accustomed to borrow his *schemes* of sermons, from his brethren or his books ; especially, if accustomed to borrow his *sermons*, because he distrusts his own faculties, or is too slothful to use them ; has very little prospect of comfort or success in his work.

Two other topics in my plan, viz. *General Grammar*, and the *History of the English Language*, would next, in order, come under consideration ; but these, I apprehend should, for the present, give place to others of greater practical utility.

The object of this Lecture, is to suggest the reasons, why a thorough knowledge of his own language, is indispensable to a preacher.

1. This is of great importance to him as a *public speaker*. It seems too evident to require argument, that a public speaker ought to understand the *language* in which he speaks ; because it is to be supposed that his hearers, generally, understand no other. The preacher of this country, (with few exceptions) has no medium of communicating instruction, except the *English* tongue. He may replenish his own mind from the resources of antiquity ; he may gather up stores of knowledge from the study of dead languages, but he can *use* this knowledge, for the instruction of others, only in the current language of common people. He cannot *preach* in Greek ; he cannot *pray* in Greek, nor Latin, because his hearers are not Greeks nor Romans. Among all the strange perversions to which Christianity has been

subjected; this is truly one of the most absurd, that men should ever have been required to worship their Maker, in an unknown tongue.

However a *partial* knowledge of his own language may be sufficient to a preacher for all the common purposes of life, it is not sufficient for the proper discharge of his *official* duties. He is a teacher. He is to give instruction to immortal beings on the most momentous subjects. This instruction he must communicate in *words*; not only in words which they understand, but which are adapted to convey his meaning, clearly, and impressively. He must choose his words with judgment, or he cannot be perspicuous and forcible. He must choose them from an ample store, or he cannot be copious and eloquent. He cannot do justice to his hearers and his subject, then, without being master of the language in which he speaks. Unquestionably skill in foreign languages is essential to the preacher; because it gives him access to stores of knowledge, from which he, above all men, should not be excluded; because it gives him access to the best standards of style; because the radical principles of all languages are the same; and because this general skill in languages implies so much taste and reading, as almost necessarily ensures a good acquaintance with his *own* language. Still a man may be tolerably acquainted with dead languages, and yet be essentially deficient in that knowledge of his *own*, which is requisite to a public speaker.

But it may be said, the greater part of congregations consist chiefly, and not a few wholly of plain, illiterate people. Being no judges of language, all they require or need, is the communication of interesting *truths*, without exact regard to words. What then? Because the choice of words claims not the preacher's *first* attention, does it follow that it is a matter of entire indifference? Or that the plain language, in which it is necessary to address plain hearers, may with propriety, or must of course, be incorrect? That simplicity is by no means inconsistent with purity, or with elegance, I shall have occasion to show hereafter. But suppose that the majority of a man's

hearers are indifferent about grammatical blunders, or, if you please, do not perceive them; is it wise in him to contract such habits of inaccuracy, as not to perceive them *himself*? Would his sermons be less intelligible, or in any respect less profitable to these illiterate hearers, by being *free* from such blunders? If not, doubtless his duty requires him to avoid them. Should he ascend the pulpit in a rustic *dress*, no part of his hearers would respect him the more for it, and many of them would be disgusted. In every congregation there are hearers of *some taste*, who will hardly excuse coarse and incorrect *language* in a preacher, any more than they would excuse him for appearing, on the Sabbath, in the *apparel* of a clown. The opinion of Dr. Campbell on this point deserves to be well considered. "Vulgarity of language," says he, "does inexpressible injury to the thought conveyed under it, how just and important soever it may be. You will say that this is all the effect of mere prejudice in the hearers, consequently unreasonable, and not to be regarded. Be it that this *is* prejudice in the hearers, and therefore unreasonable. It doth not follow that the speaker ought to pay no regard to it. It is the business of the orator to accommodate himself to men, such as he sees they *are*, not such as he imagines they *should* be. But, upon impartial examination, the thing perhaps will not be found so unreasonable as, at first sight, it may appear.—That the *thought* may enter deeply into the mind of the reader or hearer, there is need of all the assistance possible from the *expression*. Little progress can it be expected, then, that the former shall make, if there be any thing in the latter, which serves to divert the attention from it. And this effect at least, of diverting the attention, even mere grammatic blunders, with those who are capable of discerning them, are but too apt to produce."

2. If the justice of these thoughts is admitted, as applicable to him who *speaks*, much more must it be admitted as applicable to him who *writes* for the public. To this service every preacher is liable, in some form, to be called. "It was extremely well said," remarks the author just quoted, "by a very

popular preacher, who when consulted by a friend that had a mind to publish, whether he thought it befitting a writer on religion, to attend to such little matters as grammatical correctness; answered, 'By all means. It is much better to write so as to make a critic turn Christian, than so as to make a Christian turn critic.' " Let it be remembered then, by every Theological Student, that he who allows himself to violate the settled principles of his native tongue, even in *desultory speaking*, will blunder with his *pen*, from the mere force of habit. And any momentary effort to rescue himself from this reproach, for a special occasion, will be fruitless, because the very fact that he blunders without *knowing* it, disqualifies him to be a critic on himself. His only alternative in this case, is, to save his reputation for prudence, by committing his manuscript to the fire; or to make himself ridiculous, by submitting it to a censorship, where no apology will be admitted for the negligence of the writer.

3. The best writers on the study of eloquence, have agreed that it *ought to begin with the principles of grammar*. Without a thorough knowledge of these, no one can attain the higher properties of elocution. The man who is expected to speak in the English language, ought to take care that the words he uses *belong* to the language; that they are employed according to the English idiom, and in the sense assigned to them by the best writers. This extensive knowledge of the language, is to be attained only by familiar acquaintance with its standard authors. Accordingly Quintilian affirms that propriety and copiousness of diction, depend primarily on *skill in grammar*. "Wherefore, he says, they are not to be regarded, who treat this art as though it were dry and trifling. For unless the future orator, faithfully lays his foundation *here*, whatever is built upon it will fall to the ground. Grammar is the only one of all our studies, that has in it, more profit than ostentation. Let no one then, he adds, despise the elements of this art; not because it is a great thing to distinguish consonants from vowels, and semi-vowels from mutes; but because in entering into the prin-

ciples of language, we acquire habits of accurate discrimination, adapted not only to sharpen the genius of youth, but to exercise the highest powers of erudition and science."

In this connexion, it may be useful to offer a few remarks on English *Orthography*.

That this has been so unsettled, has been the reproach of our language. In its infancy, while new dialects were often introduced by the changes of war, there was no uniformity of spelling, even in the pages of the same author. To remove this deformity, Sir Thomas Smith, Queen Elizabeth's Secretary of State, proposed to adjust the spelling to the pronunciation, by rejecting all superfluous letters. Similar attempts were afterwards successively made by Dr. Gill, Master of St. Paul's school, London; by Charles Butler, and by the poet Milton. Johnson says, "These reformers measure by a shadow, or take that for a standard which is changing, while they apply it." Certainly if the body and substance of a language, as it is found in books, must follow the ephemeral modes of pronunciation, there is an end of all stability. A book written now will hardly be intelligible in the next century; and a book published this year in Louisiana, would need a glossary to render it intelligible, even now, to common people in Massachusetts. Besides, this system would confound and cut up all our etymologies, and destroy the ties by which we trace our affinity to the great family of languages, dead and living.

In later times, some respectable men have attempted silently to introduce a reformed orthography, by spelling their own writings in their own way. Lardner, Benson, Elphinstone, and Franklin successively failed in these attempts.

Verbs, which in Chaucer's time, ended in *en*, exchanged this termination for *eth*, and this again for *es*: thus *loven* became *loveth*, and then *loves*. "This latter change," Mr. Addison remarks, "has wonderfully multiplied a letter, which was before too frequent, and added to that hissing in our language, which is taken so much notice of by foreigners." So, as we have turned the *eth* of our ancestors into *s*,—we make this single let-

ter do the office of a whole word, in the possessive case of nouns, and represent the *his* and *her* of our forefathers. *John's book*,—for *John, his book*. By a similar transformation, *en* and *ed* are changed into *t*. The participle *gotten* has become *got*—*bended, builded, creeped, gilded*, have become *bent, built, crept, gilt*.

Though the labor of multitudes had proved incompetent to arrest the fluctuation of our orthography, the work has been nearly accomplished by one man. Since the publication of Johnson's Dictionary, it has been generally regarded as our best standard. Still, correct scholars differ in a few words. One omits, and another inserts the *u*, in *honor, labor*. One uses *s*, and another *c*, in *expense, defence*. One adds, and another rejects *k*, in *public, politic*. But the words are really *few*, in which there is not an established orthography.

I will suggest a few *reasons* why this subject deserves the attention of every literary man.

In the *first* place,—though correct spelling is commonly the result of early habit, and is rarely acquired to any considerable perfection, if not acquired in childhood; yet the want of it is supposed to indicate some defect in a man's mind; at least, it raises a suspicion as to the accuracy of his thoughts, in greater matters. Especially when he mingles in public life, if he cannot send a page to the press, nor write a letter of business, without blunders in orthography, it is with difficulty, we persuade ourselves that he is a scholar in any thing.*

In the *second* place,—Bad spelling often leads to bad *enunciation*. When you hear the first *n* in government, omitted in speaking, it is commonly because the speaker has been accustomed to omit that letter in writing the word. A young preacher of good sense, in writing the word *foliage*, habitually placed the *i* before the *l*. The consequence was that he mispronounced the word, and spoke of "the beautiful *foil-age* of the trees."

In the *third* place,—Bad spelling perverts the sense of words. Example:—*eminent, imminent, immanent*, are easily and often

* See Witherspoon 3. p. 491.

confounded in writing. The second differs from the first only in two letters, and from the third, only in one ; while the sense of the first is *high* ; of the second *impending* ; of the third *inherent*. Yet the preacher who never learned to spell, tells you of an *imminent* saint, of *eminent* danger &c.

I add one more example taken from the Christian Observer, which may be regarded as an extreme case. "A preacher, in discoursing on that text, *WRITE, blessed are the dead that die in the Lord*, made this observation, "There is a *RIGHT* blessedness, and a *WRONG* blessedness, and departed saints are *RIGHT* blessed, that is, *truly* blessed." A striking proof, subjoins the Christian Observer, how desirable it is, that public teachers should be able not only to read and *write*, but also to *SPELL*."

To resume the main subject :—

It would be directly to my purpose, to show, how much an extensive knowledge of the language which we use, promotes *facility* and *despatch in writing* ; and how important such a habit of despatch is to a minister, who from the variety and magnitude of his other duties, is often called to write much in a little time. It would be equally to my purpose, to trace on a higher scale than orthography, the principles of that connexion which confessedly exists, betwixt *writing* badly, and *speaking* badly ; and to show how a nice perception of the grammatical structure of sentences, tends to produce a correct and energetic delivery. It must suffice just to hint these considerations here ; but another point perhaps deserves a few more particular remarks.

4. There is a sort of *literary patriotism*, which good men, as well as others, may be supposed to feel on this subject. Consistently with the highest obligations of religion, we may desire to see the language of our country, and of our ancestors, rendered as perfect as possible. Strange as it may seem, this principle was much stronger in its influence among the ancients, than with us. Plato, who is called the father of Grammar, and Aristotle, who reduced it to a regular science, were succeeded by a long list of the first men in Greece, who labored with great industry, to perfect their native tongue. The case was the

same at Rome. The study of grammar was introduced into that city by Crates a Greek ambassador, who had always made this his principal occupation ; having written nine books of criticism upon Homer. The purity and beauty of the Latin tongue, in the Augustan age, and the height to which elegance was carried at that period, have been the admiration of subsequent ages. But the rapid progress of that language towards perfection, in that short period, almost ceases to be a subject of wonder, when we see such men as Scipio, and Laelius and Cicero, and Caesar, the greatest men of their age, and the two last among the greatest men of *any* age, in the midst of their vast employments, still combining their efforts for the improvement of their own language. Take one fact from Cicero's Epistles to Atticus. These two men it seems had agreed to meet, and hear Tyrannion read a book which he had composed. Atticus, in his zeal, having heard the book, without waiting for his friend, was thus reproved by Cicero : " What, did I several times refuse to hear that book because you was absent ; and would you not stay to share that pleasure with me ? But I forgive you, because of the admiration you express of it." What was that book, which could give so much pleasure to such illustrious men ? It was a treatise on *grammar*, particularly on *prosody*. " I admit, says Quintilian, (with these great examples in his eye,) I admit that in grammatical researches, extreme and trivial minuteness, and that only, may injure genius. Was Tully less an orator, because he loved this art so greatly himself ;—or because, in his letters, he charged his son so strictly to perfect himself in the propriety of language ? Did Caesar's books on analogy abate the vigor of his style ? or was Messala less splendid, because he published whole volumes, not only on single words, but on letters ? " We may add now, was Quintilian himself less worthy of his great fame as a master of eloquence, because he occupied thirty five pages of his Institutes upon the orthography and accent of the Latin tongue ?

Respectable examples, of the same sort, may be mentioned in modern times. Bishop Sprat, in his History of the English

Royal Society, says, "Of late, in many parts of Europe, gentlemen have formed themselves into academies, chiefly for the purpose of perfecting the language of their own country." Among these societies, so honorably alluded to by the prelate, the Academy at Paris became conspicuous by its efforts and success. And no man, surely, need feel himself degraded by attention to an object, which excited so deep an interest in the elegant minds, and claimed so great a share in the literary labors of such men as Fenelon, Addison, and Johnson.

The result of the whole is this; for a minute accuracy in speaking and writing his own language, a preacher deserves no honor; but for a *want* of it, he deserves reproach.

LECTURE II.

PRELIMINARY REMARK.—GRAMMATICAL PURITY;—WHAT DOES IT IMPLY? WHAT IS THE LAW OF LANGUAGE?

As a preliminary remark, it may be proper here to say, that the whole plan of these Lectures rests on the broad canon, that the *pen* and the *tongue* are the grand instruments of oratory. Thought must employ language as its vehicle, and this vehicle is what we mean by *style*. This embraces two general branches; (1.) *Words*, which are the primary materials of style. (2.) The *combination* of words in *sentences*, including construction and arrangement, or what we mean by composition. The former is the province of Grammar; the latter, both of Grammar and Rhetoric.

To the **FIRST** of these branches, viz. **WORDS**, as *the primary materials of style*; I shall devote this and the following lecture. The observations to be made in this lecture, fall under the general head of *grammatical purity*.

Purity implies,

1. That the words and phrases used, *belong to the language* in which we speak or write. If our words convey *no* meaning, or a *false* one, to those whom we address, we speak to no good purpose. The man whom you would convince or move, must first *understand* you: and to make him understand you, the words which you use, must be those to which he is accustomed.

You violate the principles of purity then, if you use words that are *obsolete*. Many words which are not so far obsolete as

to have lost their signification, are not entitled to a place in good writing. If an intelligent reader can guess at the meaning of *somnolent*, *displacency*, and *tractation*, in the style of Bates; or of *ugsome*, *overcomable*, and *obliviousness* in Latimer, no intelligent writer will use these words *now*, as they are no longer pure English.

Purity may be violated also by the introduction of *foreign* words. This takes place chiefly from three causes; *conquest*, *commerce*, and *affectation*. Conquest operates in this case with irresistible power. It is not to be expected that the *language* of a people can remain unchanged, amidst the operation of causes which transform their institutions and habits. The influence of commerce, though less violent, and less apparent than that of conquest, is not less efficacious. As a single man, by intercourse with strangers, insensibly mingles their language with his own, so a commercial people will, almost of course, incorporate into their customary speech, words appropriated to the business and commodities of other countries. Perhaps the *affectation of learning*, is as great a source of innovation, as either of those just mentioned. No sound objection certainly can be made against enriching the English tongue, by adopting good words from foreign languages, when such words *are needed*. But we gain nothing by admitting such words into our language, in cases where we have already words enough, equivalent in sense, and in all respects as good as those we are called upon to adopt.

2. Purity implies, that we use words and phrases according to the *idiom* of the language in which we speak.

This distinction is of no small importance in promoting accuracy of style. Perhaps in forming a sentence, every *word* we employ belongs to our native tongue; but it does not follow, that the sentence is pure English. Our *Translation of the Bible*, which in general perhaps, may be considered the best standard of pure English, occasionally departs from our own idiom. This I grant it ought sometimes to do, in conformity to the Hebrew and Greek, because, it would otherwise be impossible in many instances, to exhibit the original *import* of a passage.

But there was no such reason for adopting the French idiom, as in this case; "What went ye out, *for* to see?"*

No single cause operates so powerfully to produce this defect, which grammarians call *solecism*, as the *translating of foreign books* into our own tongue. Johnson says "*translation is the pest of speech*. He that has long cultivated another language, will find its words and combinations crowd upon his memory; and haste, and negligence, refinement and affectation will obtrude borrowed expressions. No book was ever turned from one language into another, without imparting something of its native idiom. This is the most mischievous and comprehensive innovation. *Single words* may enter by thousands, and the fabric of the tongue continue the same; but new *phraseology* changes much at once; it alters not the single stones of the building, but the order of the columns." He adds,—if literary men would cultivate our style, "let them instead of compiling grammars and dictionaries, endeavor, with all their influence, to stop the license of translators, whose idleness and ignorance, if it be suffered to proceed, will reduce us to babble a dialect of France."†

3. Purity implies that we use words in their *customary sense*.

This we may fail of doing, though we violate no rule of

* That which was only an inadvertence with the translators of the Bible, has been a matter of *design* with many other writers. The *affectation of conformity to the French language*, has almost done away that nice discrimination, which belonged to one class of our pronouns. The distributive *each*, which was formerly restricted to *one of two*, now means *one of any number*; and *either* is often applied in the same manner; "the United States, or *either* of them." In the same way we give up the discrimination of our *local adverbs*, *here, there, where*; with their correspondents, *hither, hence, and whence*; and say, "Where is the man gone? When will he come here? *From whence* did he come?" The latter phrase, though evidently pleonastic, is becoming established by the authority of good writers. In imitation of the French reciprocal verbs we do violence to our own idiom, by placing an objective case after a neuter verb. "He repented him of the sin."—"Go, flee thee away."

† See Preface to Dictionary.

etymology, or of syntax. To make this evident a few *examples* may be necessary. A writer in the *Spectator* says, "If I was put to define modesty, I would call it the reflection of an *ingenious* mind, when a man has committed an action, for which he censures himself." This word *ingenious* respects an *intellectual* quality merely, whereas the writer meant to express a *moral* quality, denoted by another word—*ingenuous*. A similar defect appears in the following sentence, extracted from Blair's Lectures. "Sassia pushed on Oppianicus, to the destruction of her son, whom she had long hated, as one who was *conscious* of her crimes." Conscious is here used improperly, for knowledge derived from external evidence: whereas it truly denotes, perception of one's own mental exercises. No man is conscious of another's crimes.

The past tense and participle of the verb *to set*, are often carelessly used as though derived from the verb *to sit*. Hence the phrases, "he sat out on his journey;"—"the sun sat;" and "the sitting sun," are not confined to the vulgar.

A British prime minister, of modern times, said in Parliament,—“We have but *two alternatives*, war, or armed preparation for defence.” Now, what is an *alternative*? It is a choice betwixt *two* things, so that if one be taken, the other must be rejected. Yet Englishmen, it seems, claim the liberty to make *two* alternatives, and of *two* things, where they allow the Americans to make but *one*.

The educated men of a country are the constituted guardians of its literature. On its Christian scholars, and especially its ministers, devolves the charge of preserving its language from declension. For reasons which have been briefly stated, it is especially incumbent on them, to write and speak correctly, a language which is the chief instrument of their official intercourse with men, and which must derive its character more from their influence, than from that of all others. The remarks and exemplifications, which I am now to give you, gentlemen, have no other object, than to aid in forming your habits as writers and speakers, now, while the forming of these habits

can properly receive more attention, than after you enter on the great, and engrossing business of your sacred profession. We proceed now to inquire,

I. *By what general principles shall we determine when we write or speak our own tongue with purity and propriety?* Some respectable men have maintained that the *law* on this subject, is to be taken from *Etymology*.

Horne Tooke may, perhaps, be considered as the champion of this theory. But is the theory correct? Let us take one of the most celebrated examples, from his "Diversions of Purley," introduced by the great topic of his thoughts, as a politician, "the Rights of man."—RIGHT, he says, is no other than *regitum* (regitum) the past participle of the Latin verb *regere*."

"JUST is the past participle of *jubere*."

"A RIGHT conduct, is that which is *ordered*."

"A RIGHT line is that which is *ordered*, or directed, the shortest between two points."

"A RIGHT and JUST action is such a one as is *ordered* and *commanded*."

"A JUST man is such as he is commanded to be."

Observe now how consistent the application of this theory is, with common sense. "It appears to me, he says, highly improper to say that God has a RIGHT in any case: as it is also to say that God is JUST: for nothing is *ordered*, *directed*, or *commanded* concerning God."

I wish to introduce no more of these extravagant speculations, than may serve to exhibit the principle assumed, that *etymology* is the standard of language. That this principle is essentially incorrect, may appear from the following considerations.

1. Many words *in passing from one language to another*, drop their original signification for a new one.

The customs of men are continually changing; and of course words of local and appropriate meaning, lose that meaning when the thing which they denoted, ceases to exist. Our English word *anthem*, we now use for an elevated holy song, without reference to the ancient custom of singing in *alternate parts*,

from which the name, *anti-ὑμνος* was derived. On the principles of Tooke, our word *tragedy* now signifies a *goat song*, being derived from the Greek *τράγος* a *goat*, and thence *τραγικός*, a song performed while the goat stood at the altar of the god Dionysius, to be sacrificed.

Dr. Campbell in his *Dissertations*, shows that the words *comic*, derived from the Greek; *pagan*, derived from the Latin; and *villain* in English, had all, the same original sense, denoting a *farmer or villager*. Yet these words so nearly related in etymology, have for ages lost all affinity to each other; the first denoting a theatrical representation, the second an idolater, and the third a base man.

Many of our words spring directly from ancient systems of divination. *Sinister*, originally signified, *on the left hand*; *disaster*, *evil conjunction of stars*; *dismal*, (*dies malus*) *an unfortunate day*. Yet who resorts to heathen auguries to determine the present meaning of such words? Common men now speak intelligibly, of *disasters* and *dismal* events, without knowing any thing of ancient astrology.

From the ancient form of rolled manuscripts came the word *volumen*, and our English word *volume*, which as applied to a modern book, retains nothing of its etymological sense. And the fact that the word was thus derived, is known to but few by whom it is used. The same remark applies to the common phrase, "*ut supra*"—the *above arguments*, as equivalent to the *preceding* arguments. The word *Literati*, was derived from an ancient mode of punishment, similar to one now practised in different countries, where an *adulterer* e. g. is branded with the letter A.—a *blasphemer*, with the letter B, &c. Among the Romans, a criminal, thus publicly branded with some *letter*, as a mark of infamy, on his forehead or hand, was called *literatus*. In some of the early British statutes this old Roman use of the word *literati* appears, as nearly equivalent to *banditti*. Example;—in the time of Henry VII, "*Mischievous deeds had been boldly committed by divers lettered persons*,"—that is, men who carried the ignominious brand of public justice.

One more example under this head. During the low state of learning in the dark ages, even kings were often too illiterate to write their names. Hence charters and other public papers were ratified by making the *sign of the cross*. In this way, the verb *to sign* acquired the same meaning as, *to subscribe*; a meaning, you know, to which there was no allusion in its Latin root.*

2. A still more powerful cause of mutation in the sense of words, is that the primary and literal sense, is supplanted by one that is *figurative*. This principle is so inwrought into the very structure of language, that by far the greater part of words, in all languages, acquire a metaphorical meaning. The consequence is obvious: this metaphorical meaning of a word, is often dropped, of necessity, when it passes into another language. Or a word may acquire a figurative meaning, instead of the literal. Our adjective *acute*, comes from the Latin *acus*. This originally signified a sharp-pointed, piercing instrument. Thence it was easily extended in sense to denote also a sharp-edged, *cutting* instrument. Thence by figure, it came to denote certain bodily affections, as keenness of pain; also intellectual qualities, as *wit*, *shrewdness*, *keenness* of perception. But in common use, we never think of a needle's point, when we speak of an *acute accent*, an *acute reasoner*, an *acute disease*.

Our word *line*, comes from the Greek *λίον*, *flax*, of which a cord was made. Hence we have by the amplifying power of metaphor,—a *line* of ancestors,—*line* of business, *line* of poetry; the sailor crossing the *line*; the general, breaking the *line* of an opposing army. Hence too, *linen*; and by a metonymy of the substance composing the inner part of a garment, *lining*; and hence again, the word *lining* comes to signify the inner part of many things composed of wood or metals.

* Could an old Roman come back upon the stage, and be told that our words *virtue* and *humility* are derived from *virtus* and *humilis*, in his language; what sense would he attach to the Christian phrase,—“the *virtue of humility*?”—Much the same as we should attach to the phrase,—“the *fortitude of pusillanimity*.”

This exchange of a literal for a figurative sense, is not limited to the transmigration of words from one language to another. It occurs constantly in the *same* language. We think of no incongruity, when we hear of a *golden candlestick*, the *head* of a *river*, the head of an *army*, the head of a *cane*, or the head of a *discourse*.

3. Words lose their original sense by *composition*.

Though this remark is by no means peculiar to our language; (as might be shown by innumerable examples;) my meaning may be illustrated, by instances familiar to a mere English scholar. Take the case of a preposition compounded with a verb. How often does such a word acquire a sense, altogether new and arbitrary. Thus, there is no affinity in meaning, betwixt—to *withdraw*, and to *draw with*; to *understand*, and to *stand under*. So with *undertake*, *overtake*, *outshine*. No analysis of the *component parts*, is any guide to the *sense of the whole*. The common import of our inseparable preposition *re*, is *again*; but to *remark* is not to mark again; to *reprove*, is not to *prove again*.

That *etymology* cannot be the standard of language, I think must be evident, if we consider the three sources of change in the sense of words, to which I have alluded; viz.—the fluctuation of human *customs*, the influence of *metaphor*, and of *composition*. I am happy to confirm these remarks by an extract from Dugald Stewart. “For my own part,” says he, “I am strongly inclined to think that the instances are few indeed, (if, in truth, there are any instances,) in which etymology furnishes effectual aids to guide us, either in writing with propriety the dialect of our own times; or in fixing the exact signification of ambiguous terms; or in drawing the line between expressions, which seem to be nearly equivalent.” “One thing I can state as a fact, concerning these etymological studies, when pushed to an excess, that I have hardly met with an individual, habitually addicted to them, who wrote his own language with ease and elegance.” “My opinion is, that this pedantry has, for many years past, been carried farther than the genius

of the English tongue will justify ; and has had a sensible influence in abridging the variety of its native stores of expression ; but it is only of late, that, in separating the primitive from the metaphorical meaning of words, it has become customary for critics to carry their refinements farther than the mere English scholar is able to accompany them ; or to appeal from the authority of Addison and Swift, to the woods of Germany."

The inquiry then, still remains, "*What is the law of language?*"

To this inquiry Horace has given the summary answer ;

———"usus,

Quem penes arbitrium est, et jus, et norma loquendi."

That *good use* must be regarded as the standard of propriety in speaking and writing, seems to be manifest, from the very design of language. With the exception, perhaps, of a few sounds denoting surprise or distress, there is no original connexion betwixt words, and the thoughts which they represent, This is evident from the fact that men of different nations, though they have essentially the same passions, emotions, relations, and necessities, express their thoughts in *different languages*. Words are public property. They are merely arbitrary signs, adopted by a sort of tacit compact, as a medium of intercourse among men that speak the same tongue. "The great Augustus himself, in the possession of that power which ruled the world, acknowledged he could not make a new Latin word ; which was as much as to say, that he could not arbitrarily appoint what idea any sound should be the sign of, in the common language of his subjects."

LECTURE III.

WHAT CONSTITUTES GOOD USE?—AMERICANISMS.

Having considered, in my last Lecture, the principles of grammatical purity, and the authority of *good use* in determining the present meaning of words ; I proceed to inquire

II. *What constitutes good use ?*

On this point, we may rest satisfied, I think, with the broad course of Quintilian, ‘the standard of language is not to be taken from the barbarous dialect of the *theatre*, and the *circus* ; but the *custom* of speaking is the *consent of the learned*.’

I know it may be said, “this rule, after all, leaves us in uncertainty, because it is at variance with itself. Spenser, Shakspeare and Barrow were learned men ; are all the words which they used, to be accounted good English in our times ? The rule does not imply this. Though greater license is to be given in poetry and works of science ; in ordinary style, we must confine our authorities to good writers of *modern times*. This principle was admitted by the Greeks and Romans. To the question, “at what distance backwards from this moment, are authors still to be accounted as possessing legislative voice in language ?”—the ablest of modern critics answers ; “It is safest to consider those words and idioms as obsolete, which have been disused by all good authors, for a longer period than the *age of man extends to*.”

Whatever intrinsic difficulty attends the fixing of precise limits, in this case, some *such* standard must be resorted to, or we are without standard. Let us apply here the obvious principle, that the primary purpose of speaking is to be *understood*.

Our English adjective *painful*, now signifies, *full of pain*, or *causing pain*. Very rarely is it used in either of its ancient acceptations, for *difficult*, or *laborious*. The sense which the translators of the Psalms affixed to it in this passage,—“When I thought to know this, it was too *painful* for me,” (that is, too *difficult*,) is seldom affixed to it, probably, by common readers. And I presume no one would think himself complimented now, by the high commendation of his fidelity, with which Archbishop Usher was introduced to Charles the First,—“this is a most *painful* preacher.”

The verb *to prevent*, according to established present use, signifies *to hinder*. But its etymological sense was *to come before*; and its ancient *English* sense, *to anticipate*. If this sense is not entirely lost among common people, it is to be ascribed to the fact that it must be recalled occasionally, to give any meaning to a few passages of the English Bible; as, “I *prevented* the dawning of the morning, and cried.” “Mine eyes *prevent* the night watches.” But in defiance of this respectable authority, the ancient use of this word is becoming obsolete; and a man now would hardly be thought to speak good English, or good sense, who should say as Bishop Beveridge did: “We can do all things through divine grace *preventing* and *assisting* us.”

As the canon we have adopted does not imply that all words which once were in reputable use, are now to be accounted good English, so it does not imply, that no *new* words are to be admitted into our language. This might as well have been assumed in the time of Chaucer, to the exclusion of all the improvements of modern days.

—————“Licuit semperque licebit
“Signatum praesente nota, producere nomen.”

New words may be introduced, provided they are in conformity with the laws of analogy, and of present idiom.—“As the forests change their foliage with the revolving year, so antiquated words must be succeeded by others of more recent origin. It is in vain to hope that language only shall be immutable, amidst

the fluctuation of all other human things.' When all changes shall cease in men's habits of thinking and acting; in their political, social and religious institutions; in commerce and arts; then, and not before, may we expect *language* to become unalterable. But we need not rest this point on any considerations resulting from the nature of the case, when it is so easily decided by an appeal to facts.

Perhaps no single man, ancient or modern, has ever done so much to give stability to his own language, as Johnson. His Dictionary is an imperishable monument, of the genius and learning of its author. Yet this gigantic man, with all his pride of intellect, did not *expect* to prevent changes in his native tongue. He saw it change under his own hand. He admitted words into his own *style*, which were not in his vocabulary. Subsequent lexicographers, among whom is Walker, have added many others to Johnson's list. Still Walker has omitted many words that are constantly used by the best English writers, such as *impressive*, *statement*. At last, Mr. Todd announced a new edition of Johnson, with the "*addition of many thousand words.*" These indeed are not all professedly new words; the greater part of them on the contrary, are so decidedly obsolete, that they can never be restored to a place in the language. But not a few of these words, which are now sanctioned by good use, were never before incorporated into any public standard. Such changes, half a century has produced in the language of Englishmen, notwithstanding their veneration for their great philologist. Similar changes must occur hereafter. But while the right to add new words to the language is claimed on the other side of the water, and assented to by us, the question arises, how far the same right belongs to Americans?

If the decision of this question is to be left exclusively to British Reviewers, it has long been settled that our rights, in this case, amount to nothing. Though these gentlemen were as much distinguished by their candour and decorum, as by the authoritative air with which they give judgment, still we could not submit to their judgment implicitly. Much less can we con-

sent that a question in which we have so much interest, should be decided by the sneers of ephemeral critics, without claiming the right of examination for ourselves.

That the literature and taste of Englishmen are superior to our own, ought to be admitted, and *is* admitted by all enlightened Americans; and that, without at all bringing into comparison, the powers of original genius. They are our elder brethren, and have institutions and habits, far more favorable to high improvement than we possess. We have, properly speaking, no *literati*; and *can* have none, while every man is compelled to earn his bread by some professional employment. Far be the day then, in which the great classic writers of our mother country shall cease to be regarded by us as the standard of taste. At least let us take the laws of composition from these, till we shall produce American Miltons and Addisons.

But this by no means implies that we may never add a word to the language. As an independent people, we have institutions of our own; some of which bear very little affinity to any which exist in the British empire. Shall we have no words corresponding with these peculiarities in our civil and ecclesiastical concerns? Our *church judicatories*, our *denominations of money*, and even our *national government*, we must speak of in terms of our own; that is, in terms which are either new or are used in a new signification. I know these terms are so limited in their number and application, as to have very little influence on what is properly called *style*. But I see no reason why we should not have some little share, in choosing what new words shall be added to the current language of our ancestors. Indeed with whatever ill grace our transatlantic brethren allow us this privilege, experience has proved that they cannot altogether withhold it from us. Several words of American origin have within a few years struggled into good use in England; and, in spite of carping critics, have found their way to the bar, the bench, the senate and the pulpit. Such are *organize*, *disorganize*, *demoralize*, and their verbal nouns *organization*, &c.

But it is said, 'a *flood* of new-fangled words, introduced by Americans, threatens to destroy the purity of the English tongue.' This charge is loudly preferred against us by British travellers and reviewers, and humbly echoed by writers of our own country. To this charge, I reply in the *first* place, that whatever of truth it contains, is mingled with much misrepresentation. Out of many examples to prove this, I select but two or three.

Dr. Franklin remarked, that during his absence in France, several *new words* were introduced into our language; among others he mentioned the verb *to advocate*. The British reviewers have constantly treated this as an American word. The London editor of Ramsay's History says; "it is classed among those American words which the English have altogether declined to countenance." And finally, one of our own best scholars, who had set himself professedly to *study* this subject of Americanisms, said in 1815;—"It is admitted by *all*, that the verb *to advocate*, is of American origin;"—and he plainly classed it with those words which, being censured by well educated men in England, "ought not to be used elsewhere, by those who would speak correct English."

Let us see now what the Rev. Mr. Todd, the new editor of Johnson, says of this *Americanism* in 1814. After a definition of the verb *to advocate*, he proceeds thus: "—Mr. Boucher has remarked, that though this verb has been said to be an improvement on the English language, which has been discovered by the United States of North America, since their separation from Great Britain, it is a very common and old *Scottish* word. But Mr. Boucher, he adds, has been misled in this literary concession which he has made to the Americans; for it is also an old *English* word, employed by one of our finest and most manly writers; and if the Americans affect to plume themselves on this *pretended improvement of our language*, let them, as well as their abettors, withdraw the unfounded claim to *dis-*

every, in turning to the prose writings of Milton."* He then confirms his statement, by an example from Milton, and another from Burke.

Now if we might dare to speak, after being chided so severely, we should say, here is a hard case. We are blamed, by a succession of learned critics British and American, for *making* the verb *to advocate*. While we are in the act of owning our fault, another critic says we are not entitled to the *honor* of making this word; and finally, a critic who claims to be umpire, in the last resort, says it was an unreasonable concession to intimate that the origin of this word had been even *ascribed* to Americans; and that it must be literary arrogance in us, to claim the *discovery* of a word which was used by Milton. Thus these gentlemen have fairly helped us out of a dilemma; while the manner in which they have done it, is but little adapted to excite our gratitude or respect.

Another word which is said to be peculiar to America is *counteraction*, from the verb *to counteract*. Upon this, I have only to say that Mr. Todd admits it into his vocabulary, on the authority of Johnson's Rambler.

Subscriber, used as in the following example; "He was the *subscriber* of the letter," the Edinburgh reviewers say is "an American innovation." But Johnson defines "*subscriber*," *one who subscribes*: and to subscribe he defines *to underwrite the name*; and cites an example from *Addison*, exactly parallel to this "American innovation."

Without extending these remarks further, I will only observe that much the greater part of the words, confessedly unauthorized such as *profanity* for *profaneness*, *preventative* for *preventive*, which I have been accustomed to consider as peculiar to this country, turn out on examination to have been, and to be still, as much used in England as here: and this is especially the case with our most censurable provincialisms. In illustra-

* Mr. Todd, in his zeal to condemn American claims, twice speaks of our *discovering* a word; we sometimes indeed *coin* or *introduce* a new word, but never *discover* one.

tion of this remark, I might say, that since I made out my list of examples on this subject, I have found the word *difficulted*, which I had classed with *missionate* in the lowest rank of unauthorized Americanisms, sanctioned by no less authority than that of a late English nobleman, and cabinet minister, Lord Thurlow : and *mispen*, which I had assigned to the same rank, appears to have been used by good old English writers, as Barrow, and Bishop Hall. Having erased at different times, the above two words from my list of Americanisms, I inserted the verb *to gospelize* in their place, confidently believing that we *must* own this among our "innovations ;" but this too, turns out to have been used by Milton, when North America was scarcely known. It is now obsolete.

To the charge that we corrupt our native tongue, it may be replied, in the *second* place, that the line betwixt vulgar and reputable use, is not so distinctly marked here as in England. This is the necessary result of our habits. Most of our literary men spring from obscurity, and rise by personal merit, without that safeguard in childhood, which Quintilian drew around his infant pupils ; " that they should not learn the dialect of *nurses*, which they must unlearn again." We are, besides, almost destitute of any paramount, public censorship over the press, to chastise the sallies of affectation in writers. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, the number of unauthorized Americanisms, which are admitted into good company among ourselves is *small*. We sometimes see *approve*, *belittle*, *jeopardize*, *engagedness*, *grade* and *lengthy* in books, and hear *missionate*, *variate*, *bestowment*, and *bestowment*, in conversation or prayer. But none of these I presume can be said to have the stamp of good use among us.

On the whole, we should hold our language as a precious inheritance, not to be marred in our hands. The coining of words should be governed by fixed principles, and not be left to those who are destitute of taste, and literary authority. The constitution of the great republic of letters is not to be tampered with. Let the caprice of pedantry and affectation be held in

awe by the lash of criticism. Let a firm stand be maintained against needless and frivolous innovation. Still we *must* have new words. Nor can any valid objection be made to their introduction, if they are formed according to our analogy and idiom. Nearly two thousand words have been thus formed, by composition with the inseparable negative particle *un*, as *to unbar*, *to unbind*. In the same manner, by the aid of more than fifty prefix and suffix particles, a great part of our language has been made up. So *joyful*, *fearful*, *fearless*, *hopeless*, etc. came into use; and so *prayerful* and *heartless* are coming in. In some of these cases however, the principles of analogy seem not to have been regarded. A *joyful* man is a man *full of joy*; but a *wonderful* man is not a man *full of wonder*, but the *object of wonder* to others. An *incoherent* book, is one *wanting connexion*; but an *invaluable* book, is not one *wanting value*. The want of uniformity in combining words with our inseparable prepositions, often renders them equivocal. Example;—"The average annual amount of property, shipped and *unshipped*, in London, is seventy millions."—*Un* has commonly the sense of not. The meaning of this sentence is—"property put on board ships, or landed from ships." "Shipped and *not shipped*"—would destroy the writer's meaning.

I only add two or three brief *remarks*.

The *first* is, that when a new word offers itself as a candidate for public favor, it must pass its probation in the *spoken* language, and make good its claims to reputable use here, before it can be admitted into style.

To the general caution which ought to govern us on the subject of new words, there must be a standing exception in favor of discoveries or inventions in arts and sciences. It would be idle to object to such terms as *stereotype*, *telegraph*, *galvanism*, *vaccination*. Technical words are hardly subject to general laws, as they rarely occur in style.

A *second* remark is, that the rage for adopting *foreign* words, in common speech, when we have already equivalent words of our own, is to be chiefly guarded against. On this point,

the opinion of Addison, whose taste no one will question, is expressed as follows : " I have often wished, that, as in our constitution, there are several persons whose business it is to watch over our laws, our liberties, and commerce ; certain men might be set apart as superintendants of our *language*, to hinder any words of a foreign coin from passing among us : and in particular to prohibit any *French* phrases from becoming current in this kingdom, when those of our own stamp are altogether as valuable. Our warriors are very industrious in propagating the French language, at the same time that they are so gloriously successful in beating down their power. Our soldiers are men of strong heads for action, and perform such feats as they are unable to express. But when we have won battles which may be described in our own language, why are our papers filled with so many unintelligible exploits : and our enemies obliged to lend us a part of their *tongue*, before we can know how they are *conquered* ? I do not find in any of our chronicles that Edward the third ever *reconnoitered* the enemy, though he often discovered their position, and often vanquished them in battle. The Black prince passed many a river, without the help of *pontoons* ; and filled a ditch with *faggots* as successfully as the generals of our times do it with *fascines*."

My *last* remark is, that *reviewers* are not to be regarded as oracles on the subject of style. Some of their performances are distinguished for richness of thought, and elegance of diction, which entitle them to rank with the first productions of the age. But these universal lawgivers in criticism, too often claim for themselves exemption from all laws ; and as privileged censors upon the language of others, hold themselves at liberty to range from the extremes of refinement, to colloquial vulgarism. The magisterial air, the peculiarity of spirit and object, the levity and even licentiousness, which often characterise this modern species of writing, forbid us to make it our model, in grave composition.

LECTURE IV.

STYLE.—DEFINITION OF STYLE.—PERSPICUITY.

I shall now proceed

To the SECOND general branch of our subject, viz.—*The COMBINATION of words in SENTENCES, including construction and arrangement, or what we mean by composition.*

Style is a fine art, as much as sculpture, painting, or poetry. Like other fine arts, it has hitherto been an object of comparatively little attention in our country. Many of our ablest divines have regarded it as a thing of no importance; and even at this day, some good men suppose that all attempts in a preacher to acquire skill in writing, denote a correspondent indifference to matter. From such inadequate views of this subject, we are to account for the fact that though this country has produced theological works of standard excellence, both as to Christian spirit, and depth of research; they have too commonly been written in a *style* extremely defective. There cannot be a doubt, that some of our most valuable treatises on doctrinal and practical religion, would have been much more useful, not only to men of taste, but to the unlearned, if the authors had been more attentive to the principles of good writing. The evidence of facts on this subject is not to be controverted. That book, whatever may be its intrinsic worth, which is written in a very bad style, will be *neglected*, or read as a *task*.* Quintilian says; “some are against all study of composition, and

* Ex. Dr. Hopkins' Posthumous Sermons.

consider that style as the most manly and natural, which is unpolished, such as men used, at first, without instruction. But if it is wrong for posterity to improve their language, it is wrong to exchange their huts for houses, their covering of skins for clothes, or their mountains and forests for cities. What is not improved by cultivation? Why do men bind up the vines? Why dig around them? Why clear our fields of weeds? The soil produces them. Why do we tame animals? They are born wild. See with how much more force a river runs, when it meets with no obstruction, than when its waters are divided and broken by interposing rocks. So a well connected and vigorous style, is better than one that is incoherent and feeble."

Blair and Beattie define style: "The way in which a man expresses his conceptions by means of language." Swift says—"Proper words in proper places, make the true definition of a style." As this subject has been so often and so ably treated in books, to which every scholar has access, it is my design to exhibit some *general principles*, instead of going into minute illustrations.

The first quality of style which I shall consider is **PERSPICUITY**.

When we present any truth to the mind of an intelligent man in language that is perfectly clear, he perceives our meaning without effort. But if our language is confused or obscure, his attention is at once withdrawn from the *thought* we intended to express, and occupied with the defects of the *expression*. Mr. Addison says: "There is as much difference between comprehending a thought, clothed in Cicero's language, and that of an ordinary writer, as between seeing an object by the light of a taper, and the light of the sun." And the great Roman Critic says: "That discourse which requires an interpreter is a bad one. We must take care, not only to render it possible that we should be understood, but impossible that we should be misunderstood."

When a man's style is obscure, it is owing to some of the following causes.

1. *To a bad choice of words.*

In all languages, custom has attached various significations to the *same* word. To give a single specimen from English verbs: *to make* has, according to Johnson, sixty-six meanings; *to put*, eighty meanings, and *to take*, one hundred and thirty four. This principle of language makes precision in the use of words, a difficult attainment: and exposes the careless writer to the constant hazard of being unintelligible. The most common way in which obscurity arises from this source is, that the same word is used, in the same connexion, with *different significations*. Example: "that *just* man has *just* finished his mortal course." Here *just* denotes in the first place *upright*, while in the second place, it is uncertain whether almost or recently is intended.

2. Obscurity may arise from *bad arrangement*.

The meaning of every word in a sentence may be perfectly obvious, and yet the sentence be unintelligible. If the collocation of words is not such as the relative sense of each requires, confusion will be the necessary consequence. The following example from a distinguished writer, is chargeable with this fault. "I do not remember to have met with any instance of modesty, with which I am so well pleased, as that of the young prince whose father was a *tributary king* to the Romans."* By the phrase, "*tributary king to the Romans*," the mind is held in a suspense, which would have been prevented by a small change in the arrangement, thus: "a *king tributary* to the Romans." In another example of modern date, we see a gross violation, not only of perspicuity, but of elegance, thus; "The following is part of the description given of the celebration of the reestablishment of Popery, by Bonaparte, by Mr. Yorke, who was present."

Quintilian tells us, that a question at law arose on the terms

* Spect. No. 373.

of a will, ordering the heir to erect "*statuam auream hastam tenentem*." The point in dispute was, whether it was to be a *golden statue*, holding a spear; or a *statue* holding a *golden spear*.*

In all languages, the different parts of speech may be grammatically connected with different parts of a sentence, leading to a correspondent difference in sense. This is especially the case with our language, which has but few inflections. Our *adjectives*, for example, have no variation of case, gender or number. We say *happy man, happy men, happy women*. Whether we refer to one person or more, to male or female, to agent or object, is not determined by the form of the *adjective*, but by the *sense*. Without great care in arrangement, therefore, the sense becomes obscure. Take this sentence: "God heapeth favors on his servants, ever liberal and faithful." In Latin, these words in this order, would be rendered perspicuous by *inflection*. But in English, the epithets *liberal* and *faithful* may refer to *God*, or to his *servants*: and the ambiguity can be remedied, only by a change of arrangement. The same cause often produces uncertainty in the reference of pronouns and relatives. Beattie illustrates it by this example: "I am going with letters to the post office, which I have in my pocket." Though this sentence would be inelegant in Latin, the *number* of the relative *which*, would instantly fix the meaning. Whereas in English, the doubt is solved, not by grammar but by common sense.

I might observe too, that adverbs, and all those minor parts of speech, which serve to qualify and connect other words, should be so placed in a sentence, as that the mind may instantly perceive their relation to those words, whose signification

* Of the same sort, is the celebrated response of the oracle, "*Ibis et redibis nunquam peribis in bello*." The present order of the words may affirm either, "thou shalt never return," "or thou shalt never perish." A change of the adverb's place would remove the doubt. The similar response to Pyrrhus, would not be freed from doubt by any change of arrangement.—"*Alo te Romanos vincere posse*."

they are designed to affect. Example; three changes of sense in the following sentence, are produced by varying the place of the adverb *only*. "This book *only* was loaned to me"—means *this* and no other. "This book was *only* loaned to me"—means *loaned*, not *sold* or *given*. "This book was loaned to *me* only"—means to *me* and to no other.

There is one other violation of perspicuity by bad arrangement, so common, that it deserves to be especially noticed here; I mean *the wrong position of circumstances*. A single example may be sufficient; "I return my answer, to the question which you sent me, *in the following words*." This clause, *in the following words*, is ambiguous, because the collocation does not determine whether it refers to the question, or the answer.*

3. Obscurity of style arises in various ways, from *affectation*.

This weakness in a writer is sometimes displayed in the *length* and *involution* of his sentences. To acquire the reputation of genius or erudition, he despises whatever is common, and aims at a style that is above the level of ordinary minds. Hence his laboring faculties unburden themselves in such a profusion of words, and in such a complicated group of members and circumstances, that it must require, indeed, uncommon powers to divine his meaning. I know that a long sentence is not always obscure. It may have so much simplicity and order in its structure, as to render the sense very obvious. But protracted periods, that are *artificial* in structure, are seldom understood without labour, to which a clear writer will not subject his readers.

This complex form of sentences, is still more fatal to perspicuity, when an affected pomp of diction is superadded. It is reason

* We can hardly look amiss for instances of a fault so very common in the structure of sentences. A book lately sent me for our public library, was accompanied with a letter from the author, beginning thus: "I send a copy of the work which I have been occupied in preparing, a year or two past, for the library of the Andover Institution." Here the last clause being misplaced, makes a merely incidental thing the writer's chief object in preparing his book.

enough why a writer should be unintelligible, that he regards the *sound* rather than the *signification* of his words.

But affectation may lead to obscurity in sentences by too much *brevity*, as well as by too much *length*. As a writer pays no compliment to the understanding of those whom he addresses, by supposing it necessary to dilate every thought with a tedious multiplicity of words; so he is not to suppose that every thought, which reflection has made familiar to himself, will of course be familiar to others. A great sentiment may sometimes be expressed clearly in a very few words. But where great conciseness results from an effort to utter our thoughts in the fewest words that can be employed, we contract an elliptical phraseology, as unfriendly to clearness as too much prolixity. "Brevis esse laboro—obscurus fio."

The following remarks on affected obscurity in writing, I quote from a standard author, as applicable to the several defects just noticed. "Mr. Cowley observes to one of his friends, —' You tell me, that you do not know whether Persius be a good poet or no, because you cannot understand him; for which very reason, I affirm that he is *not* so.' This art of writing unintelligibly, has been very much improved by several of the moderns, who observing the general inclination of mankind to dive into a secret, and the reputation many have acquired by concealing their meaning, under obscure terms and phrases; resolve, that they may be still more abstruse, to write without *any meaning* at all. The Egyptians who made use of hieroglyphics, to signify several things, expressed a man, who confined his knowledge altogether within himself, by the figure of a dark lantern closed on all sides; which though it was illuminated within, afforded no manner of light or advantage to such as stood by it. For my own part, I should much rather be compared to an ordinary lamp, which consumes itself for the benefit of every passenger.'"*

* Spect. No. 379.

4. The last source of obscurity which I shall mention, is *indistinct conception* in a writer.

A man's language is intimately connected with the structure of his mind: it is indeed a *copy* of his mind, presented to others, either on paper, or in articulate sounds. When he writes, he thinks visibly: when he speaks, he thinks audibly. How then can the expression of his thoughts be perspicuous, when the thoughts themselves are confused. Horace says, "when a man is master of his subject, he will not be deficient in fluency of style, nor in lucid order."*

Let one undertake to describe a city, or give a narrative of facts with which he is but partially acquainted, and you see at once, that knowledge which he possesses imperfectly, he cannot communicate fully and clearly. The same principle is universal in its application. A writer can never make that clear to his *readers*, which is not clear to *himself*. He is perplexed in finding words to express his meaning, and his language is indefinite and dark, because his conceptions of his subject are indefinite. But on common subjects, let a man thoroughly comprehend and feel what he wishes to utter, and his expression, though it may be incorrect will be perspicuous and significant. It will distinctly convey to others, the impressions of his own mind.

Shall we then conclude, that every man, who in any case writes obscurely, has a feeble understanding? By no means. The fountain of light itself is sometimes concealed behind clouds. The most strong and luminous intellect will not always preserve a writer, from expressing himself in a manner difficult to be understood. There may be some intrinsic difficulty in his *subject*. It may be so abstruse that the clearest discussion which it admits, will not bring it within the compass of ordinary minds. But if the subject *admits* of perspicuous treatment, and is well understood by the writer, his style will commonly be perspicuous. In this case I know of but two rea-

* ————"cui lecta potenter erit res,
Nec facundia deseret hunc, nec lucidus ordo."

Ars Po. v. 40.

sons why a man who thinks clearly, should write obscurely. One is, that he may have acquired no skill in using language, by the habit of writing. The other is, that he may have acquired a *bad* habit, by imitating bad models.

LECTURE V.

STYLE.—STRENGTH, AS DEPENDING ON UNITY AND BREVITY.

The next general quality of style which we are to consider, is **STRENGTH**.

By this I mean that the language which a writer employs, is adapted to convey to the minds of others, a full and vivid impression of his own ideas. He who expresses his thoughts so that they are understood, and felt, and remembered, by those whom he addresses, whatever inelegance may attend his style, is not a feeble writer. Throughout these remarks, however, I wish not to be understood as expressing the opinion, that any single property of good writing should be sought, to the exclusion of others. All the essential constituents of such writing are so related to each other, that we rarely meet with any one in great perfection where the rest are wanting. The *basis* of a good style is good sense. A vigorous and active perception, a solid judgment, and a lively fancy are qualities which, in some considerable measure, must be found united, to produce a writer of distinction. Still it should be remembered, that no one kind of writing is adapted to all the variety of subjects, which a man may be called to treat. To determine in any given case, what is the best style to be employed, he must consider the *end* to be accomplished, the *persons* to be addressed, and his own taste and temperament.

The observations which I propose to make on strength of style, may be comprised under three heads,—*unity*, *brevity* and *good arrangement*. The two former are to be now considered.

I. *Unity.*

This principle, so far as it respects the use of figures, or the simplicity of design, and consistency of parts which a composition should possess, with reference to its entire effect, belongs to another part of these Lectures.* A few remarks only are necessary here, on *unity* in the *structure of sentences*.

In every sentence properly formed, some complete sense is expressed. If the sentence is simple, it contains but one subject, and one finite verb ; if it is complex, it contains more parts, united by connectives expressed or understood. Such a complex structure may be perspicuous and forcible, even though extended to many members, if the underparts are distinctly related to the chief agent or object. But in the management of these subordinate members, a careless writer falls into confusion. He changes the form of expression, so that you perceive no common relation among the various parts of his sentence : or he presents one object before you, and while your eye is fixed on that, he introduces a second and a third. By these transitions you forget which is the governing object, or perhaps are unable distinctly to see any object.

A wrong sense is often suggested by introducing a negative clause in a sentence which is not adapted to its other clauses. In the following example,—“He is *unworthy* to live, much less to dispose of the lives of others ;”—according to unity, the negative *unworthy* is understood after *less*, which perverts the sense. Again, “Many who are not experimental Christians, and even infidels pay homage to Christianity.” After the negative clause, a positive one, viz. “*who are*” is understood, and should be expressed, to give the true sense.

The following sentence conforms in structure to syntax, but violates the principle under consideration ; “Paul was ready to please others, and careful not to give offence, by becoming all things to all men.” Here are three members. The

* These Lectures having been prepared in connexion with the author's Lectures on the composition of a Sermon, are here spoken of as a part of that course. See Lectures on Homiletics, p. 107.

writer's meaning requires that the first two should have a common relation to the last. But the first is affirmative, and the second negative. Instead, therefore, of expressing the sense intended, the structure implies that Paul, *lest* he should give offence *avoided* "becoming all things to all men." The meaning of the writer is exactly contrary to this; and would have been expressed by placing the second clause thus:—"Paul was careful not to give offence, and was ready to please others, by becoming all things to all men."

Perhaps unity is violated more frequently than in any other way, by a wrong use of the ellipsis. Such a structure as the following is very common; "He believed the truth of the Scriptures, and also in the absolute perfection of God, and that man is a ruined sinner." Here the two words "*he believed*," though omitted by ellipsis, in reality begin the two last members. But there is no unity of grammatical relation. In the first member, *believed* is an active verb followed by an objective case; in the second, it is neuter followed by a preposition governing an objective case; in the third, it is neuter followed by a noun in the nominative case. The fault would have been avoided by making the verb *active* throughout; thus,—"He believed the truth of the Scriptures, the perfection of God, and the ruin of man:" or by making it *neuter* throughout, with all the nouns in the nominative, thus: "He believed that the Scriptures are true, that God is perfect, and that man is a ruined sinner."

A mixed structure occasions so much indistinctness as to enfeeble the expression. For this reason chiefly, parenthetic clauses, when they are long and often repeated, are a blemish in style. The distinctive manner in which they must be delivered, to prevent confusion of sense, proves that a long parenthesis always endangers the unity of a sentence. And it is doubtless true that whatever impairs the unity, in the same proportion impairs the energy of style.

II. *Brevity.*

The influence of *brevity* on the strength of style, requires a more extended consideration.

In determining how much conciseness is adapted to produce the strongest effect, we should consider the nature of our subject, and the intellectual cultivation of those whom we address. The understanding is a faculty to which conciseness of diction is best suited. Hence in all countries, brevity has been considered a perfection in the language of authority, of judicial decisions, and of didactic poetry. *Strong passion* too demands it; especially the highest kind of *tender* emotion, always utters itself in a few words; while the *fancy* admits of amplification and ornament.

A compact writer dispenses with all words which do not contribute something to the sense. He regards ornament, on its own account, much as he does his shadow, which is never to be the object of pursuit, but must be permitted to attend him, if he walks in clear light. When such a writer resorts to figures, they are commonly those which present a bold and strong image at once; rather than those which exhibit a group of images.

Among the *writers* most distinguished for energetic brevity, Aristotle and Tacitus have always been reckoned. Among the celebrated *orators* of antiquity, none was more distinguished for this quality than Phocion. Persuaded that it is with words as with coins, the value of which is in inverse proportion to their bulk; he adopted a close, concise style, which gave irresistible weight to his eloquence. Hence when Phocion appeared to speak in public, Demosthenes was wont to say, "there is the axe which cuts away the effect of my words." Energy was, however, a prominent attribute of the style of Demosthenes, as Cicero strikingly said in describing the Greek orators: "*Suavitatem Isocrates habuit, subtilitatem Lysias, acumen Hyperides, sonitum Aeschines, vim Demosthenes.*"

There is much the same difference as to effect, betwixt a diffuse and a concise style, as betwixt the ordinary motion of the air, and its concentrated action through the pipe of a furnace. Style is enfeebled,

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duces debility, because it lengthens the sentence, without advance in meaning. Men of sense sometimes contract a habit of associating certain words, so that when one is used, it invariably draws its fellow after it: as *odious* and *hateful*, *pleasure* and *satisfaction*, *fruition* and *enjoyment*.

Witherspoon, after mentioning a gentleman of rank, who in drawing an address from a British borough to his Majesty, told him that the "terror of his arms had spread to the most distant parts of the *terraqeous* globe;" observes, "though it is certainly true that the globe is *terraqeous*, it was exceedingly ridiculous to tell the king so; as if his majesty were a boy; or the borough magistrates had just learned the first lesson in geography, that the globe consists of land and water, and were desirous of letting it be known that they were so far advanced."

2. A writer may become feeble, by adopting what may be termed the *intensive* style; in which I include the *diffuse* and the *inflated*.

The strength of language depends on the clear expression of thought. According to this plain principle of common sense, it has become nearly proverbial, that poverty of thought seeks to conceal itself under a profusion of words. An effort of a weak or vacant mind, to say something remarkable, betrays the scantiness of its resources by a periphrastic diction. With such a mind, *thoughts* are too precious a commodity to be dealt out freely; but *words*, which cost nothing, and which are common property to the wise and foolish, may be lavished with unsparing liberality. Careless writers do not distinguish betwixt mere *epithets*, and that necessary use of adjectives which discriminates qualities. Example;—I may speak of the "*luminous* rays," or the "*horizontal* rays" of the sun. In the former case, all the meaning is expressed in the *noun*; in the latter, a distinct meaning is added by the adjective. The same epithet may, however, become significant by a change of connexion.* If I

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all modern nations resort to the Latin. That this is not the result of caprice, merely, may be seen by the simple process of translation. The maxim of ambitious Caesar—" *Oderint, dum timeant*"—may be rendered in English; "Let them hate me, while they fear me." Our adverb *while* is the shortest that can be used; and this does not completely express the sense which is "*provided that*." At the best, we must use *eight* words, to translate *three*. If we try the same experiment on this familiar motto; "*Dum vivimus, vivamus*"—"while we live, let us live;" or this, "*Vincit, Christo duce*,"—"He conquers, Christ being his leader;" in each case *six* words are employed to translate *three*.

But it is more to my purpose to observe, that the varied inflection of the ancient languages, enables the orator to arrange the *chief words* of a sentence to the best advantage. One of the earliest principles that was settled in respect to rhetorical arrangement, was, that words which claim the first rank in point of importance, should occupy either the beginning or the close of sentences. To illustrate the defective structure of the English language in reference to this principle of arrangement, a modern critic thus compares the *introductory* words of the epic poets. "The subject of Homer's *Iliad*, is the wrath of Achilles: and in announcing it, his first word is *μῆνιν*, *wrath*. That of his *Odyssey* is to celebrate the character, and relate the adventures of Ulysses. His first word is *ἄνδρα*, *the man*. Virgil's *Æneid*, as has often been remarked, comprises subjects analogous to both those of Homer: warlike action, and personal celebration. His first words are "*arma, virumque*," "*arms and the man*." Milton's subject was the disobedience and fall of man. But he could not like Homer and Virgil, announce it in the first word of his poem: his language stopped him at the threshold. His words are, "Of man's first disobedience;" and thus a genius, at least equal to those boasts of Greece and Rome, was compelled by the clumsy fabric of his language, to commence his imperishable work by a *preposition*."

Still it must be allowed that our language admits, in a considerable degree, that energy and beauty which arise from rhetorical arrangement. I may say, it even admits that emphatic idiom of the oriental tongues, which constitutes a rhetorical exception to a rule of syntax. In such phrases as these; "Your fathers,—where are they!" "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear;" we have a nominative suspended, without a verb. It may be said the verb is *implied* by an ellipsis. But the case is clearly one, in which a figure claims its rights of exemption from laws which bind cold and common phraseology. Let us take another example. When the Israelites became impatient at the long stay of Moses in the mount, they came to Aaron and said, "Up, make us gods to go before us; for *as for* this Moses, we wot not what is become of him." Here the translators, distrusting the powers of their own language, provide for the grammatical regimen, by inserting two particles; "*As for* this Moses." Omit these timid adjuncts, and you have the impatience, contempt, and audacity of the rebels, expressed in a bold exclamation, perfectly consistent with the idiom of our language; "*This Moses!*—we wot not what has become of him."

I may add that our nouns answering to the *vocative* case, and verbs in the *imperative* mood, are not subject to the common disadvantages of English arrangement. Here the chief word may be made prominent at the head of the sentence. Shakespeare might have written, "*Vanity, rise up,—royal state, fall down.*" But with how much more spirit did he write?—"Up *vanity!* down, royal state!" In the commencement of Paul's celebrated speech, there is no lumber of particles to obscure the emphatic words. "Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken." So in the *Paradise lost*, no one can be insensible to the terrific energy of Satan's address to his associates;—

"Princes, potentates,

Warriors, ——— ——— ———

Awake, arise, or be forever fall'n."

These strictures on arrangement, may be concluded with the following brief remarks.

1. Rhetorical inversion being the effect of *passion*, seldom succeeds well in a cool address to the understanding.

2. Strong emotion often carries the emphatic word to the beginning of a sentence ; Yet,

3. When the speaker's design is to sustain attention, and suspend the effect, the important word is properly placed at the close. It follows,

4. That style is commonly enfeebled by closing sentences with particles, and words of little significance.

5. For the same reason a *circumstance* forms a feeble close to a sentence. Example: "I shall examine the sources, whence these pleasures are derived, in my next paper." Both perspicuity and strength require that a circumstance should be introduced as early as possible in the sentence. Yet it should never be placed between two principal members, so as to leave it doubtful to which it belongs ; nor should many circumstances which might be interspersed among the members, be thrown together in succession.

6. When different things relate to each other as to order of time, cause, effect etc., that relation should govern the order of words. Though this principle is so obvious, it is constantly violated in practice. Example: "Had such a letter been written, I could not have been kept in ignorance of its *contents*, nor of its *existence*." This careless order of words implies that the contents of a letter may be known, without a knowledge of its existence.

If this illustration seem needlessly minute to any one, I refer him to scores of printed sermons, in which he will find such phrases as these: "The *death* and *sufferings* of Christ :"—"The *necessity* and *importance* of his death."

So much I have thought it necessary to say on *strength* of style. Several of the topics now to be dismissed, I am aware have been imperfectly considered ; but more enlargement is inconsistent with the plan of these Lectures.

LECTURE VII.

STYLE.—BEAUTY, AS COMPREHENDING HARMONY AND ELEGANCE.

Probably I need not say here, that it is no part of my design, to recommend those gaudy and trivial decorations of style, which are as inconsistent with cultivated taste, as with Christian simplicity and sobriety. On this point, my views have already been expressed with sufficient distinctness, and they will appear more fully, in considering the appropriate style of sermons.* But certainly there is a decent regard to ornament, not beneath the dignity of the pulpit. Style may be both clear and forcible, while it is harsh and repulsive. The Christian soldier, in fighting the battles of his Master, deserves no applause for the *rust* that covers his armour; especially since the sword of truth suffers no abatement of its keenness or its strength by being polished.

Why do we speak to others? Not merely to instruct and convince them; but also to persuade:—to conquer their prejudices; to rouse them from indolence to feeling and action. We must remember then, that we are not to address the understanding only. Every plain man has passions, and more or less of imagination. The leafless forests of December excite no such pleasing emotions in him, as he feels from the charms of spring and the rich foliage of summer. For the same reason, a dry and naked *style* interests him less, than one which possesses the

* See Lectures on Homiletics etc. p. 172.

spirit and vivacity of a just embellishment. We may appeal in this case to a higher authority than that of Greece and Rome ; to the authority of our Saviour himself. Consistently with his exalted character as a divine teacher, he did not scruple to give an attractive *dress* to his public discourses. Nothing can surpass the simple beauty of his parables, in their adaptedness to fix attention and impress the heart.

Under the head of **BEAUTY** in writing, may, with sufficient accuracy for my present purpose, be comprehended *harmony* and *elegance*.

I. *Harmony*.

To analyze the principles of what the ancients called *numerous composition*, and their nice rules of measure, quantity, and cadence, might be amusing to the mere scholar, though it can scarcely deserve the serious attention of one who is to minister in holy things. But to avoid that harshness which offends, and that monotony which tires the ear, is an object of no inconsiderable importance to any one, who would convey his thoughts to others in the most interesting manner. This requires attention both to the selection of single words, and to their combination.

As to the choice of words, Longinus says,—“it has a wonderful effect in winning upon an audience. It clothes a composition in the most beautiful dress ; it animates our thoughts and inspires them with a sort of vocal life.”

On this point one general principle is to be regarded ; that whatever is uttered with difficulty, is painful to the hearer. The least attention to the analysis of letters, will show that some are long, others short ; some full and open, others narrow ; some soft and smooth, others hard and rough. It will follow, especially in the combination of letters, that some will occasion very little, and others very great effort to the organs of speech. The flowing smoothness of certain celebrated passages in the Greek and Roman poets, is accounted for on this principle.

On the same principle, we should avoid as far as possible another fault, to which our theological writers have a strong pro-

pensity ; I mean such tedious and unseemly compounds as *unsuccessfulness, wrong-headedness, worldly-mindedness*.

We may consider harmony as it is affected by the *combination* of words, both in the composition of members, and in that arrangement of members, which forms a flowing period.

The order of words in a member should be such as not to compel the vocal organs to pause betwixt sounds, where no pause is required by the sense. For the same reason that a collision of open vowels retards utterance, certain uncombinable consonants are spoken with great difficulty. Without considerable effort in articulation, the ear will not distinguish betwixt "his cry moved me" and "his crime moved me."

A succession of monosyllables, as they occasion uniformity and great deliberation in utterance, renders style heavy. The effect is somewhat like that of placing an accent on each syllable of long words. So far as harmony depends on variety, a succession of very *long* words must also be unfavorable. From the multiplicity of monosyllables in our language, the former fault is much more likely to occur than the latter. As an example of smooth construction arising from a proper combination of long and short words, this passage from an address of our Saviour may be mentioned ; "Consider the lilies, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin ; and yet I say unto you that Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these."

Another violation of harmony, arises from the recurrence of similar letters and sounds. This critics have called *alliteration*. Very little refinement of ear is necessary to perceive the defect in this sentence : "A division by various *pauses*, into proportionate *clauses*, *causes* the distinction of verse from prose." And this ; "A *declamation* on the state of the *nation*, contained this *observation*."

There is another kind of sentence, extremely common in careless composition, where the recurrence of similar sounds is combined with the heaviness of monosyllabic structure. There are two cases in which I have most frequently observed this of

fence against good taste. One is when the construction is such as to require a reduplication of the ancient *genitive case* made in English by a *preposition*, or *preposition* and *article*. Example: "I was desirous *of* obtaining a sight *of the* splendor *of the* interior *of the* royal habitation, *of* which I had heard much." This clashing of particles is obviated at once by a trifling variation;—"I desired to see the splendid interior of the royal habitation." The other case is, where the construction is encumbered with particles, by the *infinitive mood*. Example: "I am ready frankly *to say to* all who wish *to know* my views *to-day*, who are willing *to weigh* the force of argument now *to be* addressed *to* them, and candidly *to survey* the whole ground; that I do avow the opinion ascribed *to* me."

Let no one think because his pen is not likely to commit such extreme aberrations as these, that he needs no caution on this head. In its less obvious forms, this fault is more common perhaps; than any other of equal magnitude in style. In every such case, a writer may choose a better order of words, by a small change of structure, entirely consistent with the laws of perspicuity.

The only remaining consideration, to be noticed in this connexion, is the influence of *accents*. To this, however unimportant it may seem, the charm of music and of verse, is in no small measure to be ascribed. Instead of minutely discussing this principle as affecting the beauty of language, I will only give an example.

The following line of Pope is smooth, with an accent on every second syllable.

"Some place the bliss in action, some in ease."

Interrupt this order of accent, and the smoothness vanishes: thus — "Some in action place the bliss, some in ease." Examine the finest sentences of Cicero or of Addison, and you find in them this metrical arrangement.

Next to the proper *order of words*, as conducive to harmony, we may consider the *distribution of members* in a sentence.

A long sentence, if not clogged by needless words and bad

arrangement, is sometimes very perspicuous and forcible. But it must necessarily be difficult to pronounce, unless the pauses are properly distributed. In a long sentence, therefore, harmony requires such an adjustment of parts, that the whole may preserve a just proportion, and be delivered without labour to the organs of speech. In sentences strictly periodic, caution in this respect, is especially necessary ; because if the length, or arrangement of pauses is such as to exhaust the breath, before the close ; the meaning of the whole is lost, when suspended, as it often is, upon the last member or word. Here, as in many other cases, the principles of good delivery are inseparably united with those of good composition. "They are counter-parts of one great operation of the human mind, namely, that of conveying the ideas and feelings of one man to another, with force, precision, and harmony." For the same reason that a good speaker will utter the close of a sentence with proper strength, inflection, and articulation ; a good writer will so arrange his period, that it may be clear, smooth, and full in the conclusion.

Having suggested these thoughts on the beauty of language as resulting from *harmony*, I proceed,

II. to some remarks on *Elegance*.

Melmoth, who is himself a distinguished model of composition, observes, that certain writers "avoid all refinement in style, as unworthy a lover of truth and philosophy. Their sentiments are sunk by the lowest expressions, and seem condemned to the first curse, of creeping on the ground all the days of their life."

The chief characteristics of elegance are *dignity* and *simplicity*.

Dignity forbids the use of *vulgar* and *cant words*, and *phrases* : for the obvious reason that on the principle of association, they suggest ideas inconsistent with the decorum of an elevated, and especially a religious discourse. On this account merely *colloquial* terms can scarcely be admitted into style. But this by no means implies that dignity requires or admits an inflated

diction, consisting of hard, high-sounding words. For the reason just named, *low* and *offensive images* are improper. A preacher of bad taste might draw a lively picture of the plagues of Egypt ; but the more exactly, and completely this representation should be drawn, the more would it excite disgust. Whereas a just picture of the thunder, and hail storm, the slaughter of the first-born, or the overthrow of the host in the Red sea, would be dignified and even sublime.

Simplicity is opposed more especially to *ostentation*. I agree with Mr. Pope, that "No author is to be envied for such commendations as he may gain by that character of style, which his friends must agree together to call *simplicity*, and the rest of the world will call *dulness*. There is a graceful and dignified simplicity, as well as a bald and sordid one, which differ as much from each other as the air of a plain man from that of a clown. Simplicity is the mean between ostentation and rusticity." In this view, all incongruity in the parts of a composition ; all parade of learning, or of peculiarity in sentiment ; all display of art ; all pedantry, and pomp, and profusion of ornament in language, are inconsistent with simplicity. This rare excellence of style, is precisely that which every scribbler supposes he can imitate or excel, while its attainment is limited to superior genius and taste.

I cannot better illustrate my meaning on this point than by a few examples. The first is an account of Cranmer's martyrdom, as extracted from the "Fathers of the English Church."* "When he came to the place where the holy bishops, Latimer and Ridley were burnt before him for the confession of the truth ; kneeling down, he prayed to God ; and not tarrying in his prayers, putting off his garments to his shirt, he prepared himself to death. His shirt was made long, down to his feet ; his feet were bare ; likewise his head, when both his caps were off, was so bare, that not one hair could be seen upon it. There was an iron chain tied about Cranmer. And when the

* Vol. 3. p. 50.

wood was kindled, and the fire began to burn near him, stretching out his arm, he put his right hand into the flame, which he held so steadfast, (saving that once with the same hand, he wiped his face,) that all men might see his hand burned before his body was touched. His eyes were lifted up into heaven, and oftentimes he repeated, 'this hand hath offended; O this *unworthy* right hand,' so long as his voice would suffer him; and using often the words of Stephen, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,'—in the greatness of the flame, he gave up the ghost."

Every one may see how easily this artless and tender narrative would be spoiled, by the addition of a few tawdry decorations. As it is, the whole transaction is brought before the eye as a vivid reality.*

* The following picture of the plague in London in 1665, as a specimen of simple and impressive description, the editor ventures to add to the illustrations cited by the author.—"In its malignity it engrossed the ill of all other maladies, and made doctors despicable. Of a potency equal to death, it possessed itself of all his armories, and was itself the death of every other mortal distemper. The touch, yea the very sight of the infected was deadly: and its signs were so sudden, that families seated in happiness at their meals, saw the plague spot begin to redden, and wildly scattered themselves forever. The cement of society was dissolved by it. Mothers, when they saw the sign of infection on the babes at their bosom, cast them from them with abhorrence. Wild places were sought for shelter—some went into ships and anchored themselves afar on the waters.—But the angel that was pouring the vial, had a foot on the seas, as well as on the dry land. No place was so wild that the plague did not visit it, none so secret that the quick sighted pestilence did not discover—none could fly that it did not overtake.

It was as if Heaven had repented the making of mankind, and was shovelling them all into the sepulchre.—Justice was forgotten, and her courts deserted. The terrified jailers fled from the felons that were in fetters—the innocent and the guilty leagued themselves together, and kept within their prison for safety—the grass grew in market places—the cattle went moaning up and down the fields, wondering what had become of their keepers—the rooks and the ravens came into town and built nests in the mute belfries—silence was universal, save when some infected wretch was seen clamouring at a window.

For a time, all commerce was in coffins and shrouds:—but even that ended. Shrifts there were none; churches and chapels were

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Take another example from the account which the Evangelist gives of our Lord's resurrection. "Behold, there was a

open, but neither priest nor penitent entered: all went to the charnel-house. The sexton and the physicians were cast into the same deep and wide grave; the testator and his heirs and executors were hurled from the same cart into the same hole together. Fires became extinguished, as their element too had expired—the seams of the sailorless ships yawned to the sun. Though doors were open, and coffers unwatched, there was no theft;—all offences ceased, and nought but the universal wo of the pestilence was heard of among men. The wells overflowed, and conduits ran to waste: the dogs banded themselves together, having lost their masters, and ran howling over all the land; horses perished of famine in their stalls—old friends but *looked* at one another when they met, keeping themselves far aloof—little children went wandering up and down: numbers were seen dead in all corners. Nor was it only in England that the plague so raged. It travelled over a third part of the whole earth, like the shadow of an eclipse, as if some dreadful thing had interposed between the world and the sun, the source of life.

At that epoch, for a short time, there was a silence, and every person in the street for a moment stood still; and London was as dumb as a church-yard. Again the sound of the bell was heard—for it was the sound, so long unheard, which arrested the fugitive multitude and caused their silence. At the third toll a universal shout arose, as when the herald proclaims the tidings of a great battle won, and then there was a second silence.

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great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the keepers did *shake*, and became as *dead* men!" Here is not one swelling word, and yet the representation is so perfect that it carries us to the *spot*, and makes us spectators of the scene. The same simplicity appears in the correspondent narrative of another Evangelist, which is still more delicately minute and interesting. In reading it, you see the affectionate Mary, on the morning of the third day, while it was dark, visiting the sepulchre. The stone is rolled away;—she runs to Peter and John. They set out together in haste,—John outruns Peter, comes to the sepulchre, looks in, and wonders; Peter arrives, and with his characteristic ardor goes in,—examines the linen clothes, and the napkin folded by itself;—John assumes courage, and goes in also; the body of Jesus is gone;—they slowly retire, meditating on this scene of mystery and amazement. In the mean time, Mary returns, weeping. The narrative proceeds; "And as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white, sitting the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it *was* Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou?—whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, *Mary*: she turned herself and saith unto him, *Rabboni*! which is to say, Master."

Here is no effort at display: all is unaffected simplicity. And yet to any man, I will not say who has refinement of taste, but to any man who has a *heart*, this painting must be exquisite. He seems to hear every word that is spoken. He is there him-

self ; sees every motion, every look :—sees the tears of Mary, her heart now agitated with the hurry of surprise, now melting with the anguish of grief, and then, bursting with astonishment and joy, to see her beloved Saviour alive again.

It is proper here to make a remark, which will be more fully illustrated in another place, that real passion never utters itself with studied ornament. Let an artificial writer describe to you the grief of a father for the loss of his son, and he will probably do it with frigid brilliancy of epithets. But let the father himself speak, and you hear the language of the heart : “O my son Absalom !—my son,—my son Absalom ! Would God I had died *for* thee, O Absalom, my son, my son.”

To conclude ; An elegant writer possesses something more than that sprightliness of fancy, which substitutes pertness and brilliancy for simplicity and good sense. He possesses genius, sensibility, and cultivated taste. It is this character, in an eminent degree, which Cicero ascribes to Caesar, in the remark on his Commentaries ; that “while he seemed only to furnish others with materials for writing a history, he discouraged all wise men from attempting to write on the same subject.” If I were to give a summary description of an elegant style, I would say, it is that which expresses the best thoughts in the fittest language ; with neither exuberance nor defect. It has regularity without stiffness, sprightliness without levity, light without glare, ease without carelessness, and dignity without ostentation.

LECTURE VIII.

STYLE.—SUBLIMITY.

I proceed in this Lecture, to some remarks on *sublimity* of style.

Longinus, whose treatise on this subject has been universally regarded as possessing a standard authority, says, “that performance which does not transport the soul, can never be the true sublime. That, on the contrary, is grand and lofty, whose force we cannot withstand; which sinks deep, and makes such impressions on the mind as cannot be easily effaced.” Accordingly subsequent writers have defined sublimity as not merely an exhibition of great objects with a magnificent display of imagery and diction; but that force of composition, which strikes and overpowers the mind, which excites the passions, and which expresses ideas at once with perspicuity and elevation. As an example of this, Quintilian mentions Cicero’s eulogium on Pompey the great, in his defence of Cornelius Balbus; in which the orator was interrupted by cries and clapping of hands. The splendor, and majesty, and authority of his eloquence, forced from his auditors a spontaneous burst of enthusiasm, which suspended reason, and made them forget themselves and the dignity of the place.

As a quality of style, sublimity consists either in thought or expression. It consists primarily and chiefly in *thought*.

One might suppose this to be so nearly self evident as to require no illustration, if the eloquence of *words* had not been so commonly mistaken for that of *sentiment*. And yet it is ex-

trremely plain that a low or trifling thought never seizes, nor awes, nor influences nor melts any man, with whatever pomp of language it is expressed. On the contrary, a great thought fills and elevates the mind, though expressed in the simplest words. Take as an example of this, the passage from Moses, which Longinus and other critics have quoted; "God said, let there be light, and there was light." Here is no effort at elevation of language, but the *thought* is great; it fills the mind with an awful impression of divine power. With the same majestic simplicity, Christ calls a dead man from the grave; "Lazarus, come forth:" and hushes a tempest; "Peace, be still."

That sublimity does not consist chiefly in words, is evident from the fact, that its highest impression may be felt, where words are not used. The expanse of the ocean, the canopy of heaven,* an aged forest, a precipice, a mountain hiding its head in the clouds, convey to the mind an impression of majesty, which no articulate language can express. The transparent rivulet is simply *beautiful*;—the Nile or the Amazon, rolling on its flood of waters, is sublime. The gentle blaze of a candle is beautiful; the blaze of *Ætna*, of a comet, or of the sun, is sublime. In surveying these, the mind constantly feels the impression of great and amazing objects. The warbling of a flute is beautiful; but the roaring of a tempest, the thunder of Niagara, or the concussion of an earthquake, is sublime.

The same principle holds respecting the sublime in composition, as Horace proposes for the trial of poetry. "Transpose the words, drop measure and number; and if the passage really possesses the *acer spiritus ac vis*, the glow and inspiration of poetry, all your inversions will not extinguish it; but like a diamond unset, it will retain its lustre." Warton, in his elegant treatise on Pope, applies this principle to distinguish betwixt rhyme or measure and poetry. "Take ten lines of the *Iliad* or of *Paradise Lost*, or even of the *Georgics* of Virgil, and see whether by any critical chemistry, you can reduce them to the

* See Ps. XIX.

tameness of prose. You will find that they will appear like Ulysses, in his disguise of rags,—still a hero.”

Having made these remarks on sublimity of *sentiment*, we are prepared to proceed another step, and inquire what constitutes sublimity of *language*.

This consists in such a choice, and such an arrangement of words, as are adapted to convey a great thought to the mind with a strong and vivid impression. To accomplish this end, requires a careful application of the precepts which have been suggested in my preceding Lectures, upon perspicuity, strength, and beauty of style.

Instead of repeating these precepts, I shall only glance at the inquiry, whether vigorous and noble conceptions in a writer, can be cultivated; and whether these, where they do exist, will of course be attended by a correspondent strength and dignity of expression.

In respect to the first part of this inquiry, it is an obvious remark, that bold conception is the prerogative of genius. But as every power of the soul is strengthened by exercise, the contemplation of great objects must have a direct tendency to invigorate the intellect and the imagination. The great practical defect in systems of education has always been, that they contemplate the pupil as *passive*, or at most fill his mind with technical distinctions. They would form a writer, as a mechanic forms a bureau. Whereas the first thing should be to replenish the mind, and train it to habits of clear, discriminating, and elevated thought.

As to the other branch of the inquiry, I remark that style, being only a copy of the writer's mind, will be governed by his thoughts; ‘for thoughts make language, and mould it to their own size.’ In general, it may be said that the mind which rises to a strain of exalted sentiment, will not utter that sentiment in tame and feeble language. ‘The soul may labor with the greatness of its conceptions, and find it difficult to select words adapted to express these with the highest colouring and effect; but still the words that are chosen, whether with the greatest propriety or not, will receive force and elevation from the sentiment. A

sublime thought may indeed be debased by defective expression ; but when the mind is filled with an exalted conception, there is no reason to expect that it can fail of finding suitable words to delineate that conception, with a good degree of energy and dignity.' *

"It is the sentiment," says Pope, "that swells and fills out the diction, which rises with it, and forms itself about it : and in the same degree that a thought is warmer, an expression will be brighter ; as that is more strong, this will become more perspicuous ; like glass in the furnace, which grows to a greater magnitude, and refines to a greater clearness, only as the breath within is more powerful, and the heat more intense." Whenever a writer who has had bold and elevated thoughts, fails of clothing them in appropriate words, it must be attributed either to the poverty of the language in which he writes, or to ignorance of that language, or to a want of the skill in using words, which is acquired only by practice.

I cannot do justice even to the limited view, which I propose to take of this subject, without pointing out some of the sources from which the mind receives the most vivid impressions of sublimity. Among these may be mentioned,

First, Association.

The tendency of this to increase our susceptibility of emotion from interesting objects, must have been perceived by every one who is accustomed to notice the operations of the mind. Through the medium of the affections, we are strongly excited by seeing the place of our nativity, and the scenes of our childhood ; by recollecting a deceased friend, the *tune* which he sung, the *garment* which he wore, the *spot* where he breathed his last. In connexion with this kind of emotion, may be mentioned that which arises from contemplating what is ancient, or rare, or venerable. The sight of Jerusalem would strongly interest any one, who has the least sensibility of taste, or of piety. He would eagerly survey the ground on

* See Ogilvie on Original Composition, 2. 160.

which David and Solomon walked ; and feet enchained with a sort of sacred awe to the spot where the cross was erected, and where the Saviour was entombed. It was through an abuse of this principle, strengthened indeed by others, that the whole system of *relics* was established : that the world was taxed for ages, by the fooleries of Romish superstition ; and that Europe marched in arms on a crusade to the Holy Land.

We feel our sensibilities awakened by the sight of objects, which are associated with impressions of distinguished excellence, or of great intellectual endowments, or great achievements. A few years since, any person might have passed the bridge of Beresina, or the village of Waterloo, with perfect indifference. But now the sight of those objects must suggest a train of elevated emotions, that must swell and agitate any bosom, not altogether insensible to scenes of horror and blood, on which were fixed the anxious eyes of the civilized world. It is from the same principle that the friend of his country approaches, with sentiments of veneration, the grave of Washington : and that the man of classical taste, derives more than half his interest in visiting Rome, from the recollection of Scipio, and Caesar, and Cicero.

Certain emotions of sublimity depend on associations of majesty connected with danger. The picture of a shipwreck is sublime : the sight of a real shipwreck is much more so. But how different the emotions with which a stranger sees the mariners clinging to fragments amidst the dashing waves, from the emotions of the *mother*, whose son is one of these mariners.

A little reflection may satisfy any one, how much the dreadful grandeur attendant upon the havoc of a tornado, the explosion of thunder, or the rumbling of an earthquake is heightened by apprehensions of danger.

Secondly, Another source from which impressions of sublimity are derived, is *contrast*.

This indeed, is often only a more remote kind of association ; but it has a powerful effect to enliven and elevate a sentiment. A few examples may be selected for illustration. Dr. Young,

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great earthquake ; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the keepers did *shake*, and became as *dead* men !” Here is not one swelling word, and yet the representation is so perfect that it carries us to the *spot*, and makes us spectators of the scene. The same simplicity appears in the correspondent narrative of another Evangelist, which is still more delicately minute and interesting. In reading it, you see the affectionate Mary, on the morning of the third day, while it was dark, visiting the sepulchre. The stone is rolled away ;—she runs to Peter and John. They set out together in haste,—John outruns Peter, comes to the sepulchre, looks in, and wonders ; Peter arrives, and with his characteristic ardor goes in,—examines the linen clothes, and the napkin folded by itself ;—John assumes courage, and goes in also ; the body of Jesus is gone ;—they slowly retire, meditating on this scene of mystery and amazement. In the mean time, Mary returns, weeping. The narrative proceeds ; “ And as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white, sitting the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, woman, why weepest thou ? She saith unto them, because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it *was* Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou ?—whom seekest thou ? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, *Mary* : she turned herself and saith unto him, *Rabboni* ! which is to say, Master.”

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But incomparably the finest specimens of noble simplicity are found in the *sacred* writings. Take for example the story of aged Eli, watching, hoping, trembling, at the gate of the city, while he expected every moment to hear the result of a great battle. The messenger arrives from the army—you see the tumult, and hear the outcry in the city; you see the agitation of a man ninety-eight years old, the father and the judge of the people; while it is announced—"Israel is fled before the Philistines;—there hath been a great *slaughter* among the people;—thy two *sons* also, Hophni and Phinehas are *dead*,—and the *ark* of God is taken." You see the patriarch sink under the weight of this intelligence, drop from his seat, and expire.

Take another example from the account which the Evangelist gives of our Lord's resurrection. "Behold, there was a

open, but neither priest nor penitent entered: all went to the charnel-house. The sexton and the physicians were cast into the same deep and wide grave; the testator and his heirs and executors were hurled from the same cart into the same hole together. Fires became extinguished, as their element too had expired—the seams of the sailorless ships yawned to the sun. Though doors were open, and coffers unwatched, there was no theft;—all offences ceased, and nought but the universal wo of the pestilence was heard of among men. The wells overflowed, and conduits ran to waste: the dogs banded themselves together, having lost their masters, and ran howling over all the land; horses perished of famine in their stalls—old friends but *looked* at one another when they met, keeping themselves far aloof—little children went wandering up and down: numbers were seen dead in all corners. Nor was it only in England that the plague so raged. It travelled over a third part of the whole earth, like the shadow of an eclipse, as if some dreadful thing had interposed between the world and the sun, the source of life.

At that epoch, for a short time, there was a silence, and every person in the street for a moment stood still; and London was as dumb as a church-yard. Again the sound of the bell was heard—for it was the sound, so long unheard, which arrested the fugitive multitude and caused their silence. At the third toll a universal shout arose, as when the herald proclaims the tidings of a great battle won, and then there was a second silence.

The people fell on their knees, and with anthems of thankfulness rejoiced in the dismal sound of that tolling death bell: for it was a signal of the plague being so abated that men might again mourn for their friends, and hallow their remains with the solemnities of burial."

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of grand and astonishing images, that one is at a loss which to select. The poet shows us Satan staggering away from the stroke of Abdiel's sword ;—

—————“as if on earth
Winds under ground, or waters forcing way,
Sidelong had pushed a mountain from his seat,
Half sunk, with all his pines.”

The description proceeds :

—————“Now storming fury rose,
And clamor, such as heard in Heaven till now,
Was never: Arms, on armour clashing, bray'd
Horrible discord, and the madding wheels
Of brazen chariots rag'd ; dire was the noise
Of conflict ;— over head the dismal hiss
Of fiery darts, in flaming volleys flew,
And flying, vaulted either host with fire.”

In the progress of the battle, Michael and Satan met. The majesty of these mighty combatants is thus expressed by metaphor :

—————“two broad suns their shields
Blaz'd opposite, while expectation stood
In horror.”

At last the daring imagination of the poet describes the victory of the angels, over the rebel host, with a sublimity of conception altogether his own.

“Light as the lightning glimpse, they ran, they flew ;
From their foundations loos'ning to and fro,
They plucked the seated hills, with all their load,
Rocks, waters, woods, and by the shaggy tops
Uplifting, bore them in their hands.”*

My time will not allow but one more example from Milton, which eminently combines the grand with the beautiful ; and that whether we regard the thought or the expression. It describes the return of the Creator to heaven, after the formation of this world.

——— “Up he rode,
 Follow'd with acclamation, and the sound,
 Symphonious of ten thousand harps, that tuned
 Angelic harmonies ; the earth, the air
 Resounded, — — — —
 The heavens and all the constellations rung,
 The planets, in their stations, listening stood,
 While the bright pomp ascended jubilant.
 Open, ye everlasting gates,—they sung
 Open ye heavens, your living doors, let in
 The great Creator, from his work returned
 Magnificent, his six days' work,—a world !”

On these examples of sublimity, I subjoin no remarks, except the tribute paid to the genius of their author, by Lord Lyttleton, the younger, a libertine in morals, but one whose opinions in matters of taste are entitled, as all will admit, to very high respect. “Of all the poets, says he, that have graced ancient times, or delighted the latter ages, Milton is *my* favourite. I think him superior to every other, and the writer of all others best calculated to elevate the mind, to form a nobleness of taste, and to teach a bold, commanding, and energetic language.” He remarks, that while he was a mere boy, his father observed him, in reading the *Paradise Lost*, suddenly to lay down the book, and walk the room with violence. The passage that produced the emotion was this :

“He spake:—and to confirm his words, out flew
 Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
 Of mighty Cherubim : the sudden blaze
 Far round illumined Hell.”

“To attain a reputation for eloquence, he adds, is my aim, and my ambition ; and, if I should acquire the art of clothing my thoughts in happy language, adorning them with striking images, or enforcing them by commanding words, I shall be indebted for such advantages to the study of our great British Classic.”

I shall take notice of but one more kind of figure, as pecu-

liarily adapted to the expression of thought with great animation and dignity, and this is *personification*.

Nothing can exceed the bold and splendid imagery which is often employed in those Psalms which celebrate the triumphs of the King of Zion. In a single sentence of the Psalm that commemorates the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, are exhibited those grand events, in which the mighty hand and strong arm of Jehovah were employed for the rescue and protection of his church. "When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, Judah was his sanctuary and Israel his dominion." Then comes a burst of abrupt and magnificent imagery, which has no parallel, as to sublimity, in the highest flights of ancient poets and orators. "The sea saw it and fled; Jordan was driven back. The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs. What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? Thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams, and ye little hills like lambs? Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob." In this cluster of figures, we have personification, simile, and apostrophe blended without confusion, and adapted to fill the mind with exquisite emotion.

In the same style of energetic personification, Isaiah makes rocks, woods, floods, and mountains, live, and speak, and act. "Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy on his afflicted." And again; "The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." There is inexpressible grandeur, in this glow of the prophet's soul, while he contemplates the prosperity of the church, and the glories of her King: and thus summons the inanimate creation to break forth into joy, and swell the universal chorus of praise. The 14th chapter of Isaiah contains a sort of triumphal ode, on the excision of the king of Babylon, concerning which bishop Lowth says, "There is no piece of Grecian or Roman poetry,

(to speak my mind freely,) that may once pretend to stand a comparison with its merit." The same sublimity of conception appears in Habakkuk, when he ascribes to the ocean the properties of animated being, and gives it language and action, to express its emotions at the presence of Jehovah: "The deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high."

Homer abounds in personification. In *his* language, "an arrow is *impatient* to be on the wing, a weapon *thirsts* for the blood of an enemy." But we may say perhaps in sober truth, (what Barrow said rather enthusiastically in behalf of his favorite Milton,) that in comparison with the noble and daring images of the sacred writers :—

———"the muse of Homer sung of *frogs*,
And Virgil's, only celebrated *flies*."

I shall class the remaining observations, which I have to offer on this subject, under *three* heads of *caution*.

The *first* is, where sublimity depends on figurative representation, be careful to avoid improper *selection* or *application* of images.

The most venial fault of this sort, is that which consists in mixing *plain* language with *figurative*. This when conducted with skill, may not only be tolerated, but may sometimes contribute to heighten the effect. But as generally used, it results from confusion of thought, and is found only in a careless and incoherent style.

It is a fault of the same sort, but much greater, when *inconsistent* figures are blended in the same representation. Thus we are sometimes exhorted from the pulpit to "cultivate *humility* as an essential *branch* of a Christian's *walk*;"—to "avoid *pride* as a *root* from which many evils *flow*;"—and to be careful that we are "safely *anchored* upon the *rock* of salvation." Dr. Young, who commonly employs figures with great judgment and strength, fails, in representing the good man as having.

"One eye on death, and one full fix'd on heaven."

The two *hands* may be occupied at the same instant, with two distinct and contrary objects; but it is never so with the two *eyes*, except in cases of distempered vision. The best rule by which to try the simplicity of a figure, is that recommended by Horace, to which I have already had occasion to allude. Draw out a picture to the eye, and then its incongruities will at once be detected. Addison says;—"I have known a hero compared to a thunderbolt, a lion, and the sea; all and each of them proper metaphors for impetuosity, courage, and force. But by bad management, it hath so happened, that the thunderbolt hath overflowed its *banks*, the lion hath been darted through the *skies*, and the billows have rolled out of the Lybian desert."*

Caution is necessary, in employing *personification* and *apostrophe*, to avoid all appearance of study and artifice. The dignity of the subject must justify the figure; and its inspiration must kindle the soul to a noble enthusiasm. I know of no better example to illustrate my meaning, than that given by the infidel Hume, from the close of a sermon, which he heard delivered by Whitefield; and which he said, accompanied as it was with the most animated and perfect action, surpassed any thing he ever saw or heard *in the pulpit*. The preacher after a solemn pause, thus addressed his numerous audience;—"The attendant angel is just about to leave the threshold and ascend to heaven. And shall he ascend, and not bear with him the news of *one* sinner among all this multitude, reclaimed from the error of his ways?" Then he lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, stamped with his foot, and with gushing tears, cried aloud;—"Stop, Gabriel!—stop, Gabriel!—stop, ere you enter the sacred portals, and yet carry with you the tidings of *one* sinner converted to God." Then turning to his hearers, in the most simple but energetic language, he described a Saviour's dying love. The effect was electrical; the assembly melted into tears.†

* Spect. No. 595.

† Though this passage has been cited by Dr. Porter in another connexion, it cannot well be omitted here.

Such an apostrophe, when the subject, the occasion, and the powers of the speaker, justify its use, reaches the very highest point of eloquence. But let a cold and artificial declaimer, upon an ordinary topic, venture on such an effort, and it is not difficult to foresee the result. Mediocrity of talents is certain to fail in an attempt, where it is the province only of uncommon genius, in its happiest moments, to succeed. And it should not be forgotten that failure here is certainly ridiculous.

There is one point in regard to the abuse of figures, which must not be passed over, namely *improper protraction*.

In the bold and vehement figures, just now under consideration, a pitch of excitement is requisite, so high that it cannot be sustained, even by the best powers of oratory, except for a short period. But in figures of a less *decisive* character, too much minuteness and attenuation often spoil the effect.

It is to be regretted that false taste in this respect, so often appears in the pulpit. When the Bible says, "God is a rock,—God is a sun :—" a simple and noble thought is suggested by the metaphor. But when the preacher runs down this metaphor into minor points of resemblance, which the Spirit of inspiration never intended, not only is the strength of the figure ruined ; but it is made to suggest sentiments that are frivolous, and often impious.* I shall take the liberty to illustrate this point by an extract from the Essays of Foster, because it is so pertinent to my purpose, and because I am glad to enforce my own views in the present case, by the aid of so respectable a writer. "I do not recollect, says he, that in the New Testament at least, the metaphor which represents the benefits of religion under the image of food is ever drawn to a great length. But from the facility of the process, it is not strange that it has been amplified both in books and discourses, into the most extended description ; and the dining room has been exhausted of images, and the language ransacked for substantives and adjectives to stimulate the spiritual palate. The metaphor is combined

* See Gibbon's Rhetoric.

with so many terms in our language, that it will sometimes unavoidably occur, and when employed in the simplest and shortest form, it may by transiently suggesting the analogy, assist the thought, without lessening the subject. But it is degrading to spiritual ideas to be extensively and systematically transmuted, I might even say *cooked* into sensual ones. The analogy betwixt mean things and dignified ones, should never be pursued further than one or two points of necessary illustration ; for if it is traced to every *circumstance*, in which a resemblance can be found or fancied, the mean thing no longer serves the humble and useful purpose of merely illustrating some qualities of the great one, but becomes formally its representative and equal. By their being made to touch at all points, the meaner is constituted a scale to measure and to limit the magnitude of the superior, and thus the importance of the one shrinks to the insignificance of the other. It will take some time for a man to recover any great degree of solemnity in thinking on the delights or the supports of religion, after he has seen them reduced into all the forms of eating and drinking. In such amplified analogies, it often happens that the most fanciful, or that the coarsest points of resemblance remain longest in the thoughts.”*

My *second* caution is,—in aiming at the sublime, avoid the *tumid*.

A great thought expressed in appropriate language is sublimity ; a trite or trifling thought, dressed up in the pomp of splendid words, is *bombast*. Though it is the province of good sense to distinguish betwixt these opposite qualities of style, and though it would seem no difficult task to a cultivated taste, to make a distinction betwixt things so obviously different ; yet the resemblance is sometimes so specious as to deceive, at first view, the most discerning mind. The young writer therefore, whose fancy is easily caught with the glare of superficial ornament, needs to be especially on his guard, lest he attempt to elevate a trivial subject by gaudy decorations of style, and utter nonsense in the form of elaborate periods.

* Bost. Ed. p. 188.

But as this inflated style has already been considered, it may be dismissed here with the single remark,—that the student who would form a good style, should not cultivate a fondness for works of a *declamatory* character ; but should accustom himself to accuracy of thought,—should distinguish between *words* and *things*, between the *affectation* of elevated sentiment, and the reality. This leads to

My *third* caution, which is,—in avoiding the tumid, be careful not to adopt the *frigid* style.

The principles of just criticism, are only a digest of the laws which nature has established in the use of language. Its object is rather to preserve from blemishes, than to inspire genius. A cultivated judgment is to a writer, what the helm is to the ship. Genius is the moving principle : but without the aid of its sober auxiliary, judgment, it is always liable to dash on the rocks. Longinus says ; “The sublime is not lawless, but delights in a proper regulation. Flights of grandeur are then in the utmost danger, when they are left at random, and bold without discretion. Genius may sometimes need the spur, but it as frequently needs the curb.”

But while the great principles of style like those of the other fine arts, are reducible to permanent canons, which cannot be safely disregarded, we should avoid that servile conformity to rules, which degenerates into a mere mechanical accuracy. Addison says ; “we often take notice of men, who are perfectly acquainted with all the rules of good writing, and notwithstanding choose to depart from them on extraordinary occasions. There is more beauty in the works of a great genius, who is *ignorant* of the rules of art, than in those of a little genius, who knows and observes them.” Addison himself, however, has illustrated the refrigerant influence of extreme attention to principles of art, in his *Cato*. Voltaire admitted this character to be the greatest that was ever brought upon any stage. Yet this character, with all its elaborate perfection, is cold and uninteresting. You fall asleep, while you contemplate the nicely balanced unities of *Cato*. But Shakspeare, who has

been called the stumbling block of critics, while he sets before you in the character of Hamlet or Othello, a combination of dignity and eccentricity, of mildness and violence, agitates your bosom with alternate emotions of love and indignation, of compassion and horror.

The sum of my meaning under this head is, that though we should avoid the affectation, which claims as the prerogative of superior genius, exemption from all laws of criticism and of common sense ; we should also avoid that habit of rigid exactness, which while it regulates, extinguishes the ardor of the soul.

END.







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